

A Centennial Story
of
The Lutheran Church
in
Texas

1851-1951



SECTION ONE

"THE CHURCH WAS PLANTED"

1851-1876

DEDICATION

History is always His story. Church history in particular is the story of God at work in, through, and for individuals. Those who lend themselves to Him for such Kingdom building are classified as laymen or as clergymen. Here, too, it is the custom of man to have the names of a few leaders go up in the annals of history, while the names of their many associates go down in unsung silence. Therefore be this story

Dedicated
to the Memory of the
pioneer Lay-Men and Women in Texas
who supported the hearts and hands
of their
Lutheran Pastors
and thus, under God, made the history
that here is sketched.

PREFACE

The calendar said: November 10, 1851.

Seven men assembled in Houston to consider the advisability of organizing a Lutheran Synod. Convinced of the necessity for such action they proceeded at once to formulate the Constitution. On the third and last day they were joined by the eighth member of their association. Deep was their devotion to the Triune God. Strong was their loyalty to the Lutheran Church. Surging was their desire to serve both.

The calendar says: November 10, 1950.

Immediately ahead of us lies the centennial date and year of this first effort at organized Lutheran Church work in Texas. The assignment on which I launch forth today reads: Make available to us the story of that event, its antecedents, its personalities, and the consequences that flowed from that fountainhead.

This is not the first venture of this nature.

The convention held in the Silver Anniversary year, at Quihi on April 18-23, 1875, adopted the resolution: "That we request the Chairman to prepare a comprehensive report on the history of the Synod, its beginning and the development, on basis of the congregational reports he has received and those he is yet to receive." For several years there were repeated requests for outstanding congregational reports, seemingly in vain. To my knowledge that story was never written.

The Golden Anniversary convention, held at Cuero on November 7-11, 1901, authorized: "That, as another small memorial to the past fifty years, a history of the Synod be written to portray her founding and development." Pastor J. Mgebroff rendered this service in a book of 360 pages. In keeping with the circumstances of those days, that history was written in the German language. It is no longer available, except from the libraries of the original buyers or their heirs.

November 10, 1926, marked the Diamond Jubilee of the Synod's organization. The event was celebrated at the annual convention held at Zion Lutheran Church in Fredericksburg, May 3-8, 1927, and in special services conducted throughout the State on the following Sunday. Pastors H. Krause and M. Heinrich were the authors of the commemorative books of 173 and 101 pages and written in the German and English languages respectively. They only sketched the history of the first fifty years, then brought the story up to date.

The march of time is indicated in the fact that t-h-i-s story is to appear only in the English language. And my instructions are: "Give us

a comprehensive yet popular account of the entire 100 year period".

In the nature of the case, I shall trace the history of the First Evangelical Lutheran Synod in Texas on through its natural, legal, and present day descendant: the Texas District of the American Lutheran Church. All other Lutheran church bodies serving in Texas today appeared upon the scene in later years. Due recognition will be given them in the concluding chapter of this story.

This story is scheduled to appear in two sections. The first, bearing the sub-title: "The Church Was Planted", is to be available well in advance of the date of the anniversary. It covers the pioneer period of approximately the first twenty-five years. It is hoped that its distribution will stimulate interest in the Church's centennial. The second section, bearing the sub-title, "The Church Did Grow", is to be available by the time of the centennial. It will bring the story up to date.

In the selection of these two sub-titles and their development I have been conscious of the universal experience of that fundamental principle of the Kingdom of God which Jesus, the Lord of the Church, expressed when He said:

"The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his field. It is the smallest of all seeds. But when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches." Matthew 13:31-32.

May the story thus recorded serve to glorify God as the Builder of the Church. May it serve as a tribute to the men and women who added this chapter to the Acts of the Apostles. May it also serve as a challenge to those of us who are the heirs of these spiritual fathers of Texas Lutheranism.

Taylor, Texas
November 10, 1950

H. C. Ziehe

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CHAPTER I

THE FIELD—COLONIAL TIMES IN TEXAS

To observe the process and progress of planting the Church, specifically the Lutheran Church, in Texas we must take a close look at the process and progress of immigration and colonization. For people are the field for the planting of the Kingdom of God.

THE FIRST EFFORTS—SPANIARDS

The first efforts at the colonization of Texas were made by the Spaniards. The purposes to be served, to convert the Indians and to damn the French, determined the locations of the missions and the nationalities of the colonists. The missions were located around Nacogdoches in the extreme eastern part of the State and along the banks of the San Antonio river. The colonists were Spanish and Mexican priests, soldiers, and peons. But a century of effort brought less than 5,000 of these to Texas and, with the possible exception of priests and soldiers, they lived in the most poverty-stricken conditions.

A NEW DAY—AMERICANS

A new century, and with it a most eventful era, dawned with the year 1800. American adventurers began to drift across the borders like the first rustle of leaves before the rising wind. They were men like Philip Nolan, Augustus Magee, Dr. James Long, and their associates. They came without let or leave of the United States government, and in spite of the laws of Spain. They were called filibusters. They dared on their own—and lost.

When Mexico won her independence from Spain in 1821 a new policy was adopted. Since the population of Texas was small, it was joined to Coahuila. The governor lived at Saltillo and there the elected legislature from both areas met. For administrative purposes, a viceroy lived in San Antonio and an alcalde served as a mayor and justice of the peace in the established towns.

Furthermore, immigration and colonization was now permitted. According to the earliest terms, a married man was granted 4,428 acres of land, single men received plots in proportion, and colonizers who brought in 100 families received 23,000 acres as an award. The only cost often was the charge made for surveying and recording. Within fifteen years after such projects got underway, some 20,000 to 25,000 people arrived to build their homes and seek their fortunes.

Many came from New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia and Ohio. But the majority came from the nearer states of Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi,

Tennessee, Arkansas and Missouri. Those from the southern states brought their slaves with them. From Europe, too, they came: from England, Ireland, France, Alsace, Switzerland, and Germany. At first it all was but a trickle, but it soon developed into a stream of consequential proportions.

When the crucial year of 1836 dawned, it is estimated that almost 30,000 Anglo-Americans were within the borders of Texas. After independence was won and prior to annexation to the United States, the average annual increase in population for this near to ten year period was 7,000. By 1850, the year of our church's organization, the total population was well over 150,000 Americans and some 58,000 slaves.

At first settlements were made in the older sections of the State, south of "el Camino Real", the King's Highway, which ran from San Antonio northeast through Bastrop to Crockett and Nacogdoches and on to New Orleans. But before long this border was crossed. The capitol of the Republic was moved from Houston to Austin in the fall of 1839. This move gave assurance that the native Indians would be curbed and the settlers encouraged to advance toward the new frontier to build their homes along the valleys of the tree-covered hill country of the West.

THE EUROPEAN IMMIGRATION

From this more general picture of colonization, we turn now to that specific phase of it that brought to these shores those pioneers for whom and with whom the Lutheran Church was planted here.

That Lutherans were among the earliest explorers and the first settlers is a conclusion drawn by those who have access to the roster of their names. But when the doors were flung open to immigrants, we know that they presented themselves in ever increasing numbers. They came from the United States; they came in larger numbers from Alsace, Switzerland, Norway, Sweden and Denmark; but mainly they came from Germany. Though it is a fallacious and even a dangerous thing to try to identify Germans with Lutheranism and Lutheranism with Germans, yet, under the circumstances, it was most natural that just this native land of the Protestant Reformation should send many of her sons and daughters to many foreign shores, and now to Texas.

The circumstances alluded to were the terrible consequences of the Napoleonic wars that came to their first explosion in the years from 1830 to 1833 and reached their climax in the Revolution of 1848 and 1849. It was that old but ever new conflict in politics and economics that has its repercussions on the intellectual, social, and religious levels. The ruling classes, endeavoring to save their political life, moved ever nearer to losing it by levying oppressive taxes to support extravagant courts and military establishments. In industry the rich became richer and fewer, the poor grew poorer and more numerous. Over-population led to the increase of economic and social evils.

The undercurrent of dissatisfaction mounted to revolutionary proportions. The rising tide was increasingly championed by liberals among writ-

ers and publishers, by university teachers and student organizations, by socially-minded government officials and army officers.

The situation was definitely strengthened by the increasing flow of letters from relatives and friends in the new world, by pamphlets, books, and lectures of those who had visited that land called Texas. Among them were J. V. Hecke and Gottfried Duden who published their books in 1821 and 1829 respectively. Such glowing descriptions of the country and their dreams of untold possibilities caught the imagination of the dissatisfied, disappointed, and defeated on every level of life. Princes and paupers, merchants and serfs, farmers and mechanics, teachers and students, officers and refugees, newly-weds and established families bade farewell to the lands and lives of which they had grown tired. Their hope was that in the land beyond the sea they and their children would find freedom—personal, political, economic, religious, social, and cultural freedom.

And the more some princes and their puppet governments protested and prosecuted, the greater was the increase in the number of those who set forth on their own, or who signed up with emigration companies. As one of their number expressed it, there was the deep desire "to live under a republican form of government, with unbounded personal, religious, and political liberty, free from the petty tyrannies and the many disadvantages and evils of the old country".

Intriguingly interesting is the extent to which the strings of nationalistic interests were manipulated in various periods of early Texas history. Spain listened to the suggestion that she bring Swiss and Germans to Texas in the hope of cultivating allies against France. A retired Prussian army officer who visited Texas in 1818 advocated the purchase of Texas with the purpose of making it a Prussian colony. In view of the fact that this was prior to the date of the Monroe Doctrine, one might speculate on what might have been. After England finally recognized the Republic, "there was a good deal of talk about getting Texas to join England and become a part of the British Empire." European manufacturers and merchants eagerly contemplated the possibilities. In view of the fact that in 1841 Texas imports amounted to \$1,320,000, those speculations were well founded.

But passing by such European ambitions, let us note briefly the attitude of men of position and authority in Texas on this subject of foreign immigration. In 1830 Stephen F. Austin, Texas' most successful large-scale colonizer, gave consideration to the possibility of bringing German and Swiss emigrants to Texas. On the basis of his experiences with families of these nationalities in his original colony, he expressed himself on the subject in a letter to a friend, saying, "They have not in general that horrible mania for speculation which is so prominent a trait in the English and North American character, and above all, they will oppose slavery." The favorable attitude of President Sam Houston toward such immigrants from central and northern Europe is also a matter of record.

To help realize the aspirations of Europe's downtrodden, to take advantage of the many favorable circumstances, many individuals and

groups knocked at official doors to offer their services. For various reasons, the offers of many were declined.

The colony named after Baron de Bastrop, and the one established by Count Henri de Castro are the two better known settlements whose members came, in the first instance, from Germany, and in the other from Alsace, Switzerland, and Germany. In both places were a considerable number of Lutherans.

Not so well known is the fact that in 1838 Mr. Swen M. Swenson of Sweden conferred with President Houston on his plan for bringing a group of his countrymen to Texas. He was warmly encouraged to do so. In 1844, Mr. John R. Rierison of Norway was in Austin in the same interest and received the same support. Both men succeeded in their plans. Both men and their followers were Lutherans.

But by far the longest and strongest line of past, present, and future Lutherans arrived from Germany. Those who came prior to the Revolution in 1836 had no difficulty in deciding on which side they would stand. Santa Anna expected to find them neutral or possibly friendly. Instead they fought him from the first skirmishes to the battle of San Jacinto. Three men are cited for conspicuous service. "No man gave more unselfishly of his funds and services than did Robert Kleberg." "Edward Harcourt was General Houston's chief of staff." "Adolph Stern, justice of the peace at Nacogdoches, was the Benjamin Franklin of the Texas Revolution." He secured funds and outside help for the cause of Texas in New Orleans.

Galveston was the port of entry. No less than 7161 immigrants landed there from Bremen in the six-year period following 1840. Some found work and a home there. From Galveston the interior was reached by way of Houston or the ports on Matagorda Bay. In 1840 Houston's German voting population was around 400. In that year a "German Union" was established and incorporated by the Texas Congress. The purpose of the organization was to receive and care for needy immigrants, provide work, assist them in locating on lands nearby or in reaching the settlements in the interior.

The first-born of the German settlements was Industry in the area of Austin's colony, today in Austin county. On April 16, 1831, Friedrich Ernst received a league of land. His letters to a friend in the old country were published. By 1833 and 1834, relatives, friends and acquaintances arrived to create the settlement. A hotel operated by the Ernsts was the meeting place for many "big names" of the day. The hospitality shown earned for him the name "the father of the immigrants". The name for the colony was supplied by neighboring Americans in recognition of the industrious spirit of the founders.

Biegel's Settlement, established in 1832 and named in honor of its founder, Joseph Biegel, was the second German colony. It was located about twenty miles southwest from Industry.

Cat Spring, or Wildcat Spring, was established at about the same distance to the southeast in 1834 by Robert Kleberg. The name was derived from the fact that a settler killed a wildcat at one of the springs on colony land. A piano, oil paintings, music, and a library of books, which had been left in storage in Harrisburg, were destroyed by fire during the war. This note on family possessions gives indication of the financial and cultural status of the Klebergs and their associates.

In about the center of the triangle formed by these three settlements, William Frels located his colony, Frelsburg, in 1837. This was soon after he returned from the war, which he had followed from the storming of San Antonio in 1835 to the battle of San Jacinto.

In the same general vicinity were Roedersmuehle, so named because of a mill built by Otto von Roeder, but later called Shelby after an American settler named David Shelby; Muehlheim or Millheim; Blumenthal, the valley of flowers; San Bernard; and New Ulm. Farther to the north and east were Round Top; Berlin; Welcome, so named because "the forest, field, meadow and flowers seemed to give them a friendly welcome"; and Latium, so called because of its "Latin Farmers", men of wealth and learning. In 1837 a group of colonists were on their way to a settlement near San Antonio when they were stopped by the swollen waters of the Colorado. An American by the name of Moore was plotting a townsite. He approached the encamped Germans with an acceptable offer, and thus La Grange came into being. To the southeast from there was a large settlement called Ross Prairie and to the south another called High Hill.

In an entirely different section of the State, on the lower Guadalupe, another series of strong German settlements was established. Victoria, Yorktown, Coletoville, and Meyersville were the centers.

Other colonies might also be named. In addition to all these were the many unnamed, isolated, lonely settlements by single families or family groups that were never entered in the records or plotted on the maps. Two centers, however, must yet be mentioned. Old San Antonio added many a son of Germany to her cosmopolitan population; and now the newly established capitol city, Austin, attracted increasing numbers of them.

Thus in about two dozen communities and towns, from Galveston and Houston on the east to San Antonio on the west, from the Guadalupe on the south to the Brazos on the north, German immigrants were established in telling, predominant, or exclusive numbers. And what is important for this particular story is the fact that when the Lutheran church was planted in Texas she sprouted forth in nearly every one of the places named.

THAT MASS-IMMIGRATION EFFORT: THE ADELS-VEREIN

As the emigration pot in Germany began to boil furiously, men of position arose to counsel that the movement be organized and planned in the interest of safety, satisfaction, and success. In this interest a number

of counts and princes assembled at Biebrich on the Rhine in April, 1842. Two representatives were sent to Texas. After their return the "Society for the Protection of German Immigrants in Texas" was organized on March 25, 1844. Twenty-four dukes and princes are listed as the members. Because of this royal sponsorship, the organization's name was usually abbreviated to "Adels-Verein".

This was not the first nor the only such organization history knows of but it was the first one to select Texas as its field of operation. The idea was to buy land there; assemble able, worthy even if impoverished, people in larger groups; provide ships for transportation; and in a systematic and planned manner establish them on the acquired land. Interesting and noteworthy is the fact that by resolution financial speculation and political interests were ruled out, only philanthropic issues were to be served.

Almost every imaginable provision was worked out in detail—on paper. Then came the execution of those plans. In the end, two definite colonies, each surrounded by a series of settlements, were established at New Braunfels and Fredericksburg. But the record that tells the story is full of the tragic consequences of over-enthusiasm, misjudgment, mismanagement, and, above all, the clash between well-meant but impossible ideas and ideals and the unknown and unpredictable realities of a distant frontier.

A brief survey will have to suffice.

Five Adels-Verein ships arrived at Galveston from Bremen on July 8, November 29, December 14, December 18, and December 20, 1844. These brought 103 families totaling 439 people; 134 were listed as children, and 103 as single men over 17 years of age. From Galveston they were brought to Port Lavaca. Prince Carl of Solms-Braunfels, a leading member of the Adels-Verein and its commission-general, met them there.

Even at this late date no definite arrangements had been made for a permanent settlement. Prince Solms had inspected several sites. The only one open was the Fisher and Miller land grant located north of the Llano river and bordered on the east and north by the Colorado. Since this was so far from the coast, the prince saw the necessity of creating a settlement enroute which would serve as a base of operation. Therefore he bought a tract of land at Indian Point on Matagorda Bay, about ten miles southeast of Port Lavaca. There at Carlshafen, later called Indianola, the immigrants set up a tent camp. There, so it was planned, company wharves, warehouses, and shelters were to be built for future operations. There Pastor L. C. Ervendberg conducted services on Christmas Day in 1844.

In spite of just complaints about the food, shelter, and medical care, in spite of a shortage of transportation facilities, the caravan began moving northward during the first days of January, 1845. The route followed the east bank of the Guadalupe river. On March 15, Prince Solms closed a deal in San Antonio in which he bought two leagues, 8,856 acres, of land on the Guadalupe at the mouth of the Comal River. On Good Friday,

March 21, 1845, about 200 of the colonists were on hand to participate in the founding of New Braunfels. The spring, summer, and fall that followed were beset with all those difficulties that are common to such projects during the first year of settlement.

When the second consignment of immigrants arrived, trouble really began. From October 1845 to April 1846, thirty ships unloaded 5,247 people at Galveston. This was about 1,000 more than had been expected by Baron Johann von Meusebach who had arrived in the meantime to take the place of Prince Solms. Light schooners brought them to Carlshafen where they spent the winter in tents and shacks. The season of rain and cold was unusually long and severe. Sickness broke out and grew to the proportions of a plague. Estimates of the dead during the succeeding months varied from 400 to 1,200.

Finally a Houston concern contracted to haul the people and their possessions to New Braunfels, and a train of 100 wagons got underway in March. But the contract was broken shortly thereafter, for the United States had declared war on Mexico and the army was paying higher prices to teamsters than could the immigrants. Summer came and climatic conditions went to the other extreme. Mosquitoes brought more fever. All through the summer and fall, the unfortunate victims of many circumstances moved, as best they could, toward the interior along the designated way.

It was a tragedy-marked road. Clothes, bedding, trunks, tool chests, the sick and dying, and even human skeletons, all scattered along the way, told the gruesome story. The effect on morals and modes of life was devastating. The contagion continued and spread even after New Braunfels was reached. Symbolic of the prevailing conditions were "Koester's Plantation, as the cemetery was known in honor of the community doctor", and the dance hall where "the wretched people tried to forget their misery by dancing, carousing, and drinking."

A considerable number of the survivors of this second expedition remained in New Braunfels. Others went to establish new settlements nearby, such as Comaltown, Neighborsville, Hortontown, and Schumannsville.

The more fortunate ones were those who had left the coast in that 100 wagon caravan in March. To provide for them and the others, Commissioner Meusebach, as soon as he learned of their coming, sent 36 men out from New Braunfels to mark a roadway to the land on the Pedernales river which he had bought for another such "temporary" settlement as New Braunfels was.

On April 24, 1846, in 29 ox carts and some Mexican-style two-wheel vehicles, the first of this group of settlers pushed on from New Braunfels. On Friday, May 8, they reached the place where the advance party had begun the erection of a block-house. They named their new home Fredericksburg. Others followed the path they had blazed, and before long the community had a thousand inhabitants. In the course of not too many years, Fredericksburg also became a center from which other settlements

were established. Of those we mention Castell, Leiningen, Schoenburg, Bettina, Meerholz on the Llano river to the north, Comfort to the south, and, near by, Cherry Spring and Grape Creek.

Not all who came aboard the thirty-five ships of those two expeditions died enroute or settled in the New Braunfels and Fredericksburg colonies. Some found their way to those other colonies already mentioned, or to such cities as Galveston, Houston, and San Antonio. A few, definitely broken in spirit but not quite so in purse, bought a return passage to flee from this experience of utter disappointment.

THE CHURCH CAME TOO

As we thus have a general overview of the land and the people, we want to make one more contribution to this section before we proceed to the specific story of the planting of the Lutheran Church in Texas. That contribution is a quick survey of the earliest evidences of and efforts at organized religious activity.

Turning to the very earliest days of the colonization period, we meet the Spanish padres and their missions among the Indians. That story needs no retelling here. We pay it our respects with this observation: "Taken as a whole, the missions in Texas were not so successful as those in California . . . In 1794 control of the missions was taken from the friars and given to the civil authorities, and they began to decline . . . Apparently the number of Catholic Indians was never very large, and with the downfall of the missions, most of them reverted to their former condition. It seems as if all the labor and devotion of more than a century had been for naught."

Of the next period we read, "Mexico, following Spanish precedent, forbade every religion except the Roman Catholic and, when making grants of land, required that the colonists brought in should be Catholic." Another historian puts it this way: "Above all, the colonists must be Roman Catholics of steady habits. This was supposed to be indispensable." In advertising or in accepting contracts for a place in a given colony, this government requirement was evidently winked at. Nevertheless, this restriction was a contributing element to the fact that Protestants in Texas could not place church building on their list of early endeavors as did their counterparts in the American colonies. And so there were no Sunday schools or church services, at least not officially and openly. When they did gather for worship in their homes, or in larger groups in the temple of God's great out-of-doors, when the boys and girls were seated on logs in some shady grove or under a spreading oak for instruction, that instruction was given and the worship was led by some devout layman.

These two notes are indicative of the situation: "Methodist preachers from Louisiana occasionally held services on the Texas side of the Sabine river. Henry Stephenson preached in the Austin colony as early as 1824 and local preachers seem to have held services occasionally. After 1833, as the American element grew stronger, services were more frequent." "The first Baptist preacher known certainly to have been in Texas was Joseph

L. Bays. He came to the Sabine river in 1820. He began preaching in private houses on the Texas side and once was arrested while preaching in the Austin colony."

The victory of Sam Houston over Santa Anna at San Jacinto on April 21, 1836, brought an end to this papal dictatorship on Texas soil.

As we come closer to the time in which the Lutheran Church was planted in Texas, we meet a group of pastors of whom that church could say, "This people draw near to me with their lips but their hearts are far from me," for they often used her name but did not follow through in the use of her doctrine and practice. They were the men of the Free Protestant or United Evangelical Church. The first and most prominent among these was the Rev. L. C. Ervendberg. He came to Texas from Illinois in 1839. He gathered a congregation in Houston. In 1840 he established himself in Blumenthal and from there he conducted services in Industry, Cat Spring, Biegel Settlement, La Grange, and Columbus. In 1844 he accepted the invitation of Prince Solms to serve those whom the Adelsverein was sending over. He met the immigrants at Carlshafen and, with a Christmas service, welcomed them to their new homeland. He went with them to New Braunfels, and in the course of time, he served as pastor, teacher, probate judge, co-founder of the Western Texas Orphan Asylum, author of school laws, and president and sole teacher of the West Texas University. His successor as pastor was G. W. Eisenlohr. Others of the group were Pastors F. Basse and B. Dangers in Fredericksburg, Fiebiger in Frelsburg, F. Weisgerber in Galveston, Adolphus Fuchs in Cat Spring, and others. We shall hear more of them in the fourth chapter of this section.

Since we know of no record to decide the issue, it is impossible to say who has the honor of being the first Lutheran pastor in Texas. In 1850 the Lutheran Synod of South Carolina sent Pastor G. F. Guebner to make a trip through the State to analyze the missionary needs and opportunities. His tour seems to have ended in Galveston where he remained for a short time and organized a congregation in the latter part of that year.

In the same year, Pastor Caspar Braun arrived in Houston and organized a congregation which he served for thirty years. We shall hear more of him later, so this mention of him will suffice. His nearest neighbor was a pastor by the name of J. Heinrich Braschler. He served the settlers at Spring Branch, a rural community north of Houston.

This, then, was Texas in that eventful half-century, 1800 to 1850. That was the field, the land, the settlements, the colonists, the prevailing circumstances of life into which the Lutheran Church was planted. With the change of time at the half-century mark, her "workers together with God" were moving in upon the scene.



Christ. Fried. Spittler.

CHAPTER II

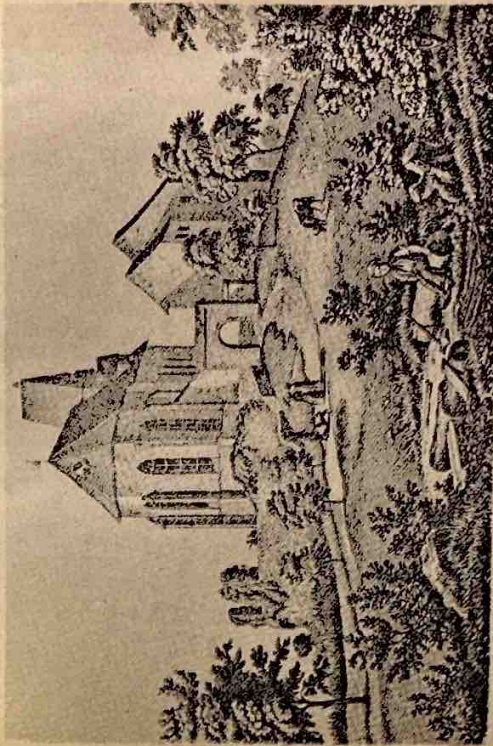
THE PLANTERS—LUTHERAN PASTORS IN TEXAS

To get the story of those who came to plant the Lutheran Church in Texas we must first acquaint ourselves with the men and the events that, in the providence of God, served to set this movement afoot.

TWO LETTERS AND MR. C. SPITTLER

It all began with a letter.

We shall call the writer of the letter Mr. X, for his exact name is not established. Mr. X was one of the younger colonists who came to Texas from Germany in that second and fateful group. He was one of the fortunate ones who survived the debacle, and settled at Fredericksburg. As one of the minor officials of the colony he had dealings with the Indians who visited and traded with the whites. He met and married a beautiful Comanche maid, went to live with her people, and roamed the hunting grounds with them. One day he wrote a letter to his mother in Germany. He suggested that an effort be made to bring the white man's education and culture to the Indians would be a desirable venture. The mother sensed a deeper need. She forwarded the letter to Mr. Christian Spittler of Basel, Switzerland.



ST. CHRISCHONA IN 1840
"The Chapel on the Hill-top"

Mr. Spittler was the moving spirit of the Pilgrims' Mission at Basel and its training school, St. Chrischona, located "an hour and a half away"

to the northwest. We shall hear more of the man, the mission-sponsoring organization, and its training school later in our story.

The letter written by our Mr. X made a deep impression on Mr. Spittler and his associates. At about the same time, during the winter months of 1849, another and similar letter came into his hands. This one had been written by one of the colonists in Texas to relatives in Switzerland. As concerns his name, he will have to be another Mr. X. But his experiences and his motive for writing were different. He was definitely a spiritually minded man and he reported on the deplorable conditions that prevailed in the settlements from the viewpoint of churchly life and Christian training.

Since its beginning the Pilgrims' Mission had stationed many of its St. Chrischona trainees all over Europe to counteract the irreligious conditions that followed in the wake of the Napoleonic Wars. More recently the first "pilgrims" had gone to Africa, Palestine, and Armenia. During the four year period, 1846 to 1849, eleven graduates had gone to the United States to assist in serving the spiritual needs of the mounting thousands who were taken there by the rising tide of European migration. But with these two letters from Texas in their hands, Mr. Spittler and his associates decided that, in so far as America was concerned, they would concentrate on Texas. Their first interest would be to relieve the spiritual needs of the immigrants. Thereafter the possibility of establishing missions among the native Indians was definitely to be considered.

KLEIS AND SAGER IN 1850

Two men of the class of 1850 were selected to do the pioneer work, to acquaint themselves with the country, to learn the needs of the immigrants, and to evaluate the qualifications of those who were to be sent to serve among them. The men chosen were Theobald G. Kleis and Christoph Adam Sager.

Time was short. Many arrangements had to be made. One problem arose at once. Would it suffice to send men who were qualified as parochial teachers, who could perhaps be ordained later? But what church authority was there in Texas that could authorize and provide ordination? On Feb. 3, 1850, the Dean in charge of those matters, Prof. Junker in Loerach, Baden, Germany, authorized Pastor Rink of Grenzach to be in charge of the necessary theological examination and ordination. According to the Certificate of one of the men, that of Pastor Sager, he and Pastor Kleis were ordained on Judica Sunday, March 17, 1850.

On the following Friday they reported to Pastor Kapff in Wilhelmsdorf. The plan and purpose was that under his supervision they might gain insight and experience in the working program of a small but efficient congregation. During the morning they were active in the school room; during the afternoon they did evangelistic work; the evenings were set aside for private study. On March 25 Pastor Kapff reported to Mr. Spittler, "The brethren Sager and Kleis are two dear members of our sacred order. Brother Kleis is with Mr. Thumm with whom he has every oppor-

tunity to become an able teacher. Brother Sager is with Dr. Luft. My congregation is most interested in you, in these men you have sent us, and in their work. Those who provide for them refuse to accept payment for this service."

According to a letter by Pastor Sager to his parents, written on April 14, the stay at Wilhelmsdorf was suddenly and disappointingly terminated. Pilgrims' Mission operated a small estate, called Pfingstweide, on Lake Constance near Friedrichshafen. It served as a home and headquarters for St. Chrischona workers, who had begun a very successful missionary work in that region. One of those workers had died suddenly. The manager contracted typhoid fever. Mr. Spittler instructed Sager and Kleis to take over the management and operation of the place for the time being.

On August 16 we find the two men back in Basel. On that date a farewell get-together was celebrated at the Faelkle, the home of Mr. Spittler and the headquarters office of Pilgrims' Mission.

As a memento of the occasion a book of devotional reading: "Himmels Blumen", Flowers of Heaven, was presented to each of them with an appropriate inscription of charge and dedication.

Under date of August 20 the following letter of commendation was signed and sealed by the authorities of Pilgrims' Mission and of St. Chrischona and presented to them. The letter presented to Pastor Sager reads as follows:

"The undersigned testify, that Christoph Adam Sager has been a student of the Pilgrims' Mission at St. Chrischona for about two years and has participated in that institution's course of study to the extent that, having passed the examination, and upon the authorization of the Church Council of the Grand-duchy of Baden, he has been ordained as an evangelical Pastor by the appointee of the Dean of that Council, the Honorable Pastor Rink in Grenzach, that he has evidenced a true Christian character in life and conduct; that he has demonstrated the expected faithfulness in the various branches of personal evangelism and social missions. He now follows a call to the state of Texas, one of the North American free states. There, in co-operation with a loyal co-worker from the same institution, to begin an evangelical mission and to work especially among the Indians. The most cordial wishes of the authors of this document, teachers and fellow students, accompany him, as also their faith-filled prayers that the Lord will richly bless His servant in His service."

Soon after this last date the final farewells must have been spoken. In the fall of that year, 1850, they arrived in Galveston. Neither the date of their departure from the homeland, nor the date of their arrival here have been preserved in the records at our disposal. But in Galveston they found a number of families who showed an interest in their presence. With them they experienced Christian hospitality. With them they discussed future possibilities. It was decided that they should go inland. Together they

went to Victoria. There they made their first contacts and conducted their business. This joint effort continued but for a short time. Their deliberations on the matter resulted in the decision that Pastor Sager should remain in that area, and that Pastor Kleis should investigate the needs and possibilities among the settlements along the upper reaches of the Guadalupe River. He established himself in the Neighborsville and Hortontown communities, about two miles to the northeast and on the opposite bank of the river from New Braunfels. The story of the experiences of the two Pastors we shall relate in their biographies in a later section of this chapter.

Suffice it here to say that the reports they sent back to Pilgrimage Mission were such that Mr. Spittler reported as follows to the readers of his missionary publication early in 1851:

"You will recall that last year we sent two of our students to Texas. Within a short time they gathered small groups about themselves and have found much work. Yes, they have seen a vision of so large a field of service that they consider it a necessity to ask that six brethren be sent to join them. As we received their report we also received a letter from a Lutheran pastor in Galveston. Together with certain families of that place, he thanks us for sending those two brethren and requests most urgently that others be sent in considerable numbers. We are convinced that the Lord has assigned our Chrischona a field of service in that land. Looking up to Him we have decided that this year's entire class, consisting of six members, shall go there."

THE SIX OF 1851

These six were John George Ebinger, Christian Oefinger, John Conrad Roehm, William T. Strobel, Henry Wendt, and Philipp Frederick Zizelmann. Making arrangements for so large a group was no small order. Many were the letters that flowed from the pen of Mr. Spittler requesting books for a necessary library for each, inviting contributions to help pay for ship passage, and arranging the final and specific training for the new "pilgrims". Pastor Werner was asked to prepare suggestions that would be helpful at such a time when the men in Texas would be ready to organize a Synod. Arrangements for the ordination were provided for by the same authorities who had served in the previous instance. It was a never-to-be-forgotten day for all those present when the group of six men were ordained and commissioned at Loerrach by Pastor Rink. As their two predecessors, so these six men were given the benefit of observation and experience in congregational work at Wilhelmsdorf, then at Fellbach and Remstal. Because of experiences reported by Pastors Kleis and Sager, one element of instructions that were given repeated emphasis was: "Be true to your Evangelical Lutheran Church and be on guard against sectarian influences and practices that abound in America."

On September 2 these six men boarded the *Franziska* at Bremen. Bad weather delayed sailing time for two days. This together with the poor food served was a test of patience for all aboard. After an otherwise uneventful trip of two months, the missionaries set foot on Texas soil at Galveston on November 5, 1851. There they found a congregation of seven

families that had been organized since Pastors Kleis and Sager had passed through about a year before. The organizer, Pastor G. F. Guebner, however, had remained in Galveston for but a short time. These families opened their homes to the travelers. As they advised with their guests concerning their next steps, two decisions were made. In response to the plea of the hosts, and following a conference among themselves, Pastor H. Wendt was elected to remain in Galveston to serve the Lutherans of that port city. The other five were to go on to Houston to consult with Pastor Caspar Braun concerning their future. Once it was so decided they lost no time in carrying out their plans. On Wednesday they had landed. Before the week was up the five were in Houston.

A trip up the bay and bayou brought them past the San Jacinto battlefield, introduced them to some of Texas' "forest primeval", and landed them at the Port of Houston of that day, where Main street meets the bayou. Though it was night when they arrived it was not difficult to contact Pastor Braun. He lived on Austin street, between Commerce and Franklin streets, and was well known for his many interests and activities. We shall have much more to say of him in the biographical section of this chapter. Suffice it here to say that he too was a graduate of St. Chrischona. He was one of the eleven referred to earlier who had originally gone to the eastern States. If he was acquainted with any of this group it was Zizelmann, who entered St. Chrischona in 1847, the year that Braun went out. Just the same, their common background, spirit, and mission made their meeting a most cordial and joyful one. A vacant house near the parsonage was soon set up for sleeping quarters and members of the congregation were easily enlisted to assist in supplying meals. Pastor Henry Bräschler, of whom we shall hear more later and who was serving at not-too-far-away Spring Creek, had dropped in on that Saturday. In their discussion of future plans it was decided that all should meet on Monday to study the advisability of setting up a formal church organization at this stage of the development of their common interest.

One of the five new-comers, Pastor Roehm, wrote as follows of these earliest observations and contacts:

"On Sunday, in the experience of our first worship service in the new land of our adoption and in the experience of the friendliness and love of the brethren Braun and Bräschler and the members of the congregation in the city and on the bayou, we finally revived. It was so refreshing, especially after the gloomy prospects in Galveston. Pastor Braun announced on Sunday that he, Pastor Bräschler and those newly arrived would be meeting for several days for the purpose of organizing a Lutheran Synod and that they would conduct services each evening."

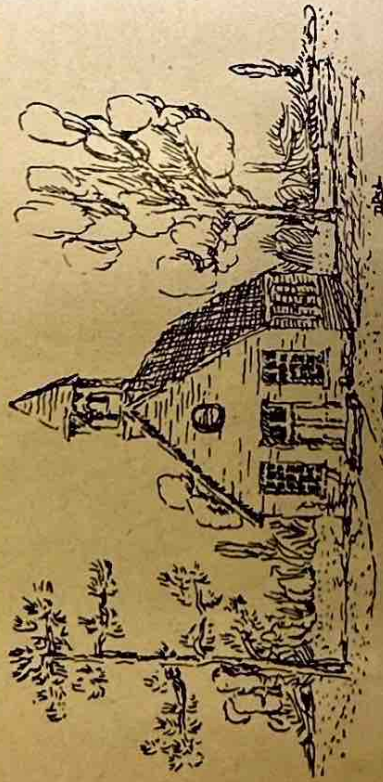
THE BIG DAY

The Lutherans of Houston had organized a congregation on July 1, 1851. At some time during that year they also erected a small school building near the place where the Christ Episcopal Church on Texas Avenue is located. Until their own church was built, in 1854, this school also served as the place of worship. Very likely because school was in

session, Pastor Braun secured the use of the church of the First Presbyterian congregation for the meeting of the pastors on Monday and the following days. Because of its significance to us, we give a description of that church as we take it from A BRIEF HISTORY of that congregation:

"The original plot of Houston consisted of 62 blocks, the southern limit being Texas Avenue. The church property was one block farther south on the southeast corner of block 68, at Main street and Capitol Avenue. The building erected on these two lots faced Main street.

"Concerning the building itself: on July 5, 1840, the Trustees notified the congregation that they had let the contract to Dr. Daniels for the erection of the church. The original building was of pine,



PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH HOUSTON, TEXAS

(Sketched from a description)

The Synod was Organized Here.

shaped like a cracker box with a gable roof, covered with shingles. It was painted white both inside and out, with stained glass windows in lieu of shades. There was a vestibule at the front. On one side of the vestibule was the church library, on the other side were stairs going up to the choir loft. The pulpit was at the west.

"The pews were of pine with solid backs, stained in mahogany and oak. The church was lighted with whale-oil lamps, a chandelier in the center and side lights on the walls. On this church was installed the first church bell ever rung in Houston.

"The church was elegant and comfortable for the times, a great satisfaction to the congregation. Though unfinished, it was dedicated on February 13, 1842. It was completed in 1847.

"The church was long 'the starting point' for parades and picnics; the parades were for the men and the picnics for the rest of the population."

Dare we say that it was providential that just this church was the "starting point" for "the parade" of organized Lutheran Church work in the State? Parade? Perhaps! Picnic? Never!

Be that as it may! Here now are the facts. The Presbyterian Church in Houston was the place. And the date was November 10. On that date Martin Luther had been born. On that date . . . But wait! Here is the official record.

"Monday morning, nine o'clock, the 10th of November, 1851. The Meeting organized itself by naming the Honorable C. Braun of Houston as president and the Honorable P. F. Zizelmann as secretary. The first session was then formally opened with the singing of hymn number 216 from the Lutheran Hymnal, the reading of a section of Scripture: Ephesians 4:1-16, and a prayer by the President."

The hymn referred to is the stirring prayer:

"O Holy Spirit enter in, Within our hearts Thy work begin
Thy temple deign to make us.
Thou Sun of joy, Thou Light divine, O let thy radiance in us shine
To constant gladness wake us.
To us ever, Light of heaven, strength be given!
We implore Thee, As in prayer we come before Thee."

Those present were Pastors Caspar Braun, Henry Branschler, J. George Ebinger, Christian Oefinger, John Conrad Roehm, William Strobel, Ph. Friedrich Zizelmann. Pastor Henry Wendt had been notified of the intentions of his associates and arrived from Galveston on Tuesday and participated in the deliberations of the last day. Pastors Kleis and Sager were too far away to be informed, to say nothing of making arrangements to be present.

We continue with the official Minutes.

"The first resolution adopted was that it is the unanimous intention and purpose of this assembly to organize an Evangelical Lutheran Synod. The second unanimously adopted resolution was that the name of the Synod, for all time to come, shall be: First Evangelical Lutheran Synod in Texas. The third resolution was that the members of the Synod shall support the treasury of the same to the best of their ability, each shall however have freedom to support institutions outside our own circle that contribute to the advancement of the Kingdom of God. The fourth resolution adopted was that this convention be adjourned and that we proceed to the organization of the Synod. The preliminary session was closed with prayer by Pastor J. G. Ebinger."

The Minutes of the "first sessions of the Synod" begin as follows:

"The session was held in the English Presbyterian Church in Houston, Harris County, Texas, on November 10, 1851. 1. The Synod was organized with the election of the following pastors as the officers of the same: president, the Honorable C. Braun; secretary, the Honorable Ph. Fr. Zizelmann; treasurer, the Honorable J. C. Roehm. 2. Resolved that we recognize only three classes of pastors, namely: ordained pastors, licensed candidates of theology, and trained catechetical teachers. 3. Resolved that a committee of two members be

appointed to write the introductory paragraph to the Constitution. This was done immediately and the Brethren W. Strobel and Ch. Oefinger were appointed. 4. Resolved that we proceed to the discussion and adoption of a Constitution."

A resolution recorded in the Minutes of the third session informs us:

"We adopt the Constitution of the Pittsburgh Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church as a whole in that form as we have discussed it point for point and have accepted it by changing it in some sections, leaving it unchanged in others."

Reserving a more detailed account of the organization that was effected for the next chapter of our story, let us here conclude by taking note of the last two resolutions that were adopted. The first reads: "At the close of this evening's mission service, the Secretary shall publicly express our appreciation to the members of the Houston congregation who have received us as their guests". The other reads: "That the Synod shall now be adjourned, to meet again, if God wills and we live, on the third Tuesday in May, 1852, at a place to be designated by the Secretary".

Six sessions were held. The morning sessions on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday began at 9:00 o'clock, the afternoon sessions at 2:00 o'clock. The in-between time was used for off-record discussions and planning along the line of organization and other matters. The evenings were set aside for worship services of a missionary character. As we read the record it all sounds so matter-of-fact and parliamentarily correct. But is this all that needs be said as we try to appraise the event? In the interest of a truer evaluation let us consider a few of the attending circumstances 1. This was the first effort made in Texas at creating an organization by which Lutheran Church work would be sponsored, coordinated, and supervised. 2. For this occasion they even had to borrow the building which served them as their meeting place. 3. Six of the eight men had arrived from Europe only on the previous Wednesday, fresh from their training school, with very little personal and independent experience in congregational and missionary activity. 4. Of the eight men only Braun, Braschler, and Wendt had congregations to serve—or, we had better say, they at least had a field of service. Whither Providence would lead the other five during the next days and weeks, only God did know. 5. And let us not pass by this part of the picture: Ebinger was 23 years old, Oefinger not quite 26, Wendt was 26, Zizelmann was 27, Strobel was 28, Braun and Roehm were 29, Braschler was 32. And the other two coming into consideration, Kleis and Sager, were 25 years of age at this time.—As we consider the attitudes displayed, and the action taken by these men, all in the light of their limited resources and the unlimited handicaps that faced and surrounded them, we must surely rise to acclaim them as heroes of the faith!

OFF TO THEIR POSTS OF SERVICE

Having set up their organization for operation and cooperation, they now faced the test of sincerity and ability by setting it all in motion. Pastor Braun of course remained with his newly organized congregation in Houston, and Pastor Wendt returned to Galveston. Pastor Braschler, for



PASTOR CASPAR BRAUN
First President of the Synod



PASTOR PHILIPP ZIZELMANN
First Secretary of the Synod



PASTOR JOHN ROEHM
First Treasurer of the Synod

the time being, discontinued his ministerial work. Enroute from Europe he had lost all his possessions in a shipwreck. His income at Spring Creek barely sufficed to supply the necessities of life, to say nothing of replacing his loss. He announced that he would return to his trade in the hope of re-establishing himself economically. It was agreed that Pastor Ebinger should continue the work at Spring Creek. Other off-the-record decisions centered on the question: where shall Pastors Oefinger, Roehm, Strobel, and Zizelmann go? There was but one answer. They must go to Pastor Kleis, near New Braunfels, for further direction. In consideration of the very depleted condition of their financial resources, they decided among themselves to buy a few groceries, carry only the most essential books and clothes, and make the trip—on foot! When they announced their plans, Pastors Braun and Braschler, who knew what late November and December weather in Texas can be, who knew the bottomless condition of Texas roads and the treachery of Texas creeks and rivers during the prevailing rainy season, persuaded them of the impossibility of such a venture. "You must go by the mail coach!" they insisted.

Let us follow them. On Christmas Eve Pastor Zizelmann wrote to Mr. Spittler at Basel. Here is his description of the trip.

"On Wednesday, November 12, we held our last synodical session. On Thursday morning at four o'clock we left Houston by coach. For passage to La Grange each of us had paid ten dollars. Our trunks we left with a business man with the request that he ship them to Seguin. We carried only our traveling bags and our leather knapsacks. The four horses hitched to the coach ran roughshod over everything that lay in the way. No one in Germany can have the slightest idea of what it means to make such a trip by coach in Texas! There are no built-up roads, to say nothing of pavement! Farmers who carry their products, such as cotton, to the city markets cut a swath through the forest that is about the width of a street, drag the trees aside while the stumps are left standing. That is the route of the mail carrier. When they come to the open prairie they cut across it according to the best guess in the desired direction. There are many creeks with deep beds but no bridges. When they are dry the coach crosses them without letup. In the winter season they are full of water. Then the horses, and sometimes the passengers, have to swim across. Yes, that is the Texas stage coach!"

In his report he mentioned the fact that they had spent a night in a hotel in a small town named Washington. If that was the historically important Washington-on-the-Brazos, we can fairly well trace the rather round about route of travel. Today's highway linking Houston, Washington, and La Grange is a run of about 125 miles. At any rate we learn that our travelers, who left Houston on Thursday morning at four o'clock, reached La Grange on Sunday evening at seven o'clock. Thus they had spent their second Sunday in Texas.

The next morning they contacted all teamsters in La Grange, in the hope of securing transportation to New Braunfels. But none were leaving before Wednesday. As they finally sat down to discuss the situation, these were the factors that demanded consideration: they could not afford to

lay over till Wednesday, since each would have to pay \$2.00 per day for room and board; they could possibly complete the journey by foot, were it not for their baggage; repeated requests had been made that morning that one of them remain in La Grange and from there reach out into the surrounding settlements. The result of their deliberations was: it is the Lord's will that one of us stay here; whoever stays can keep our baggage and send it on later; the remaining three will proceed on foot—at once. What happened then Pastor Zizelmann reports in these words:

"At one o'clock on Monday afternoon, November 17, the journey began. I walked with them for an hour. The parting was the most difficult one I had yet experienced. Before they left we knelt out there on the prairie and sang:

Jesus, lead the way, Guide us day by day;
And although the way be cheerless
We will follow calm and fearless;
Guide us by the hand, To our fatherland."

Six days later Pastors Oefinger, Roehm, and Strobel finally arrived at Pastor Kleis' "parsonage". Not a house, or any other kind of shelter, had they found on the ninety mile journey; not even for the nights. Winter rains had soaked every step of the way, had also drenched the travelers. On the last stretch, though footsore and almost exhausted two of them had to support the third who had developed a fever. But so hearty was the reception by Pastor Kleis, so extensive was the news they had to share, that it was midnight before they thought of retiring. Two of them slept at the neighbors, the other with Pastor Kleis. But, dead-tired though he was, this one could not sleep. A strange sound disturbed him. Finally he could endure the suspense no longer. He awakened his bedfellow. Laughingly he replied, "Do not let that bother you. That is a sick calf belonging to my landlord."—Well, that was something new! A sick calf sheltered in the Pastor's combination living-bed-study- and reception room! And all that within a space that was eight by fourteen feet!

Pastor Kleis, who in particular had requested Mr. Spittler to send additional help, who evidently had had word of their coming, had in the meantime been working to establish openings for them. His missionary zeal had carried him from Neighborsville to Seguin, to San Antonio, and beyond to Castroville and Quilhi. By correspondence or personal contact he had information that three of the places were ready to receive a pastor. Leaving Pastor Roehm in charge of his own school and congregation, he went with Pastor Strobel to introduce him in Victoria; then he did the same for Pastor Oefinger at Castroville and Quilhi. On his return home he reported to Pastor Roehm that San Antonio would be his place.

But Pastor Roehm could not think of himself as a missionary "in so large a city". After thinking things over, he suggested a solution of the problem. "Brother Zizelmann is the man for that place." And here is what happened. He pawned his watch and some of his clothes for \$18.00. On Sunday morning he left Neighborsville and after a three day march he was back in La Grange on Tuesday, January 6. He still had time to go out to one of the settlements where Pastor Zizelmann was reported to be. On that last day he had walked 55 miles. He reported to him on the recent

developments and told him that he would be expected to conduct his first service in San Antonio on the following Sunday.

In view of the brevity of time, in view of the fact that he was not a footman like Pastor Roehm, there was but one solution to the problem of transportation. The stage coach! But Pastor Zizelmann had so very little money! Of the \$18.00 with which Pastor Roehm had left Neighborsville he still had \$16.25. Of this amount he gave his Brother \$16.00. This, together with the little he had, sufficed to buy a ticket to San Antonio. At midnight on Thursday he left La Grange. On Saturday morning Pastor Kleis met him at the New Braunfels station to supply him with letters of reference and information based on his own missionary activities in the city. At three o'clock that afternoon "without a cent in my pocket, but with a heavy heart in my chest, the stage coach unloaded me in front of a hotel on the Public Plaza."

Now that we have met these men who were the first to come to plant the Lutheran Church in Texas, who organized that First Evangelical Lutheran Synod in Texas, now that we have followed them to their initial places of service, let us have a roll call of honor in terms of a biography of each of them.

THEOBALD G. KLEIS

Pastor Kleis was born on July 25, 1826 in Meissenheim, Baden, Germany. Of his family and early life we have thus far not been able to gather any information.

On August 25, 1849, at the age of 23 he enrolled at the Pilgrims' Mission training school at St. Chrischona near Basel, Switzerland. There he pursued his studies and practical training for mission work till March 18, 1850.

Having passed the required theological examination, he and his classmate C. A. Sager were ordained to the Lutheran ministry at Grenzach, Baden, Germany, on Judica Sunday, March 17, 1850. Following a brief period of practical training and observation in school teaching, church management, and institutional operation, they returned to St. Chrischona for a farewell gathering of fellow students, teachers, and officials. For details of parallel data we refer the reader to the biography of Pastor C. A. Sager.

On an unrecorded date they sailed for and landed at Galveston, Texas, as the pioneers of the Lutheran Church in this State. On the advice of Lutheran families, to whom they had been referred, they went to Victoria in the latter months of 1850. For a time the two men worked together in that area. Then they decided that Pastor Sager should remain there while Pastor Kleis went on to another center of German immigration: New Braunfels.

In that larger settlement he found an established congregation of the Free Protestant persuasion. But in the nearby settlements of Neighbors-

ville and Hortontown, on the east bank of the Guadalupe and about two miles to the north-east, he found open doors. He made his home with the Heinrich Heinemeyer family. His "comfortable parsonage" consisted of one room, 14 by 8 feet, which served as living room, bedroom, study and guest room. There were no windows, and "instead of a door there was, in an opening referred to as the door, a thread-bare curtain which was the play thing of wind and rain."

As to his personality we can make definite deductions from references made by those who were associated with him. Pastor Kapff in Wilhelmsdorf, with whom he worked for a while before coming to Texas, said, "Brother Kleis is with Brother Thumm, where he has every opportunity to become a strong and valuable schoolman." Or, as we read the letters and reports of the men who came later, in every reference to him he is spoken of only as "the dear" or "the beloved Brother Kleis", and that with a regularity that is noticeable.

He himself left no report of his church work that has survived. But in the account of the off-record deliberation at Houston we read: "The remaining four decided they would go to Pastor Kleis and permit him to assign them to a field of service since it had been he who had requested that they be sent, and since they had been directed to contact him." So it seems that he had assumed the initiative in reporting to Mr. Spittler at Basel, Switzerland, and the authorities at St. Chrischona. And his aggressive missionary activities had already led him to Seguin, San Antonio, Castroville, and Quilhi. The Castroville church records report a confirmation class of seven members for February 16, 1851, and a class of eleven members at Quilhi for February 26, 1851. This evidently was Pastor Kleis' work. Thus a foundation was laid for Pastor Oefinger's ministry.

In the church records of St. John in San Antonio we read, as recorded by Pastor Zizelmann:

"In the year 1851 A. D. Missionary and Pastor Theobald Kleis, stationed in Hortontown, Comal County, visited the city of San Antonio regularly in the hope of establishing an Evangelical Lutheran congregation among the German Protestants already present in large numbers at that time. Due to ill health and other obstacles he did not achieve his purpose however."

Thus the work was begun that Pastor Zizelmann later carried on to success. And with Pastor Strobel he went to Victoria to establish him in the field Pastor Sager had vacated when he went to Meyersville.

No wonder that Pastor Kleis was referred to as "Reiseprediger", the traveling pastor or a missionary-at-large.

His congregational work was confined to the settlements Neighborsville and Hortontown. In the earliest records of the Neighborsville congregation we read, "The congregation was established in the year 1850. Worship services were conducted in the river bottom, out in the open. The first pastor and teacher was T. G. Kleis, 1850-1852."

He did not formally organize a congregation. His advice to Pastor

Ziehlmann was evidently born of personal experience: "Conduct a school for children, that is the best way to break through this indifference and opposition of their elders." Such a spirit must have been present in the settlement in which he lived and labored. When his successor, Pastor H. Braschler, after having been there a year, tried to organize a congregation on a Lutheran confessional basis in August, 1853, we read, "because of certain difficulties, the assembly became so confused that they went home without taking any kind of action." Another year of tearing and preaching was required to lead the members to the necessary understanding, appreciation, and conviction. On August 13, 1854, the annual congregational meeting "unanimously adopted a constitution."

While Pastor Kleis did not witness this particular development, he did succeed with another project that was so fundamentally important, even history making. From the same source quoted above we read:

"The church was built in the year 1852", and again:

"In the year 1851 the Evangelical Lutheran congregation at Neighborsville, Guadalupe County, Texas, erected a house of God, and the first worship services were conducted there by the Reverend Pastor Theo. Kleis, the pastor at that time. This building, which was then dedicated to the public worship of the Triune God, received from the above named Pastor the name: St. Martin's Church."

The seeming contradiction in the given dates will likely be harmonized if we assume that the one writer gives the date of the beginning, and the other the completion of the undertaking.

At the meeting of the Synod at Victoria, in May 1852, "Brother Kleis reported that, for health reasons, he would be forced to make a trip to the northern states. Since he did not intend to be idle, but rather serve the cause of the church in Texas while away, he requested that the Synod furnish him a letter of membership and authorization to accept funds for the synodical treasury. The resolution was adopted that the Synod accept his offer in fullest confidence and issue him the requested papers." In the final development of his plans of travel, in quest of recuperation and health, changes were made. Instead of going north to Minnesota, he went east to Pennsylvania. In his report to the Third Convention, in Galveston in 1853, President Braun speaks of other developments: "The Synod will take note of the fact that, instead of receiving funds for the benefit of the Synod's treasury, he collected funds for six churches to be built in Texas." The Committee appointed to study the entire matter reported as follows:

"We had before us for consideration a letter from Brother Kleis, written from Johnstown, Pennsylvania, and dated March 7, 1853. The following are the main items: (1) Brother Kleis requests a release from membership in the Synod, but asks that the ties of love continue. (2) He requests that he may continue to serve as an agent of the Synod. (3) He requests that we approve his action in the matter of collections. (4) He reports that he has received \$396.40 and has expended or advanced \$323.37, with \$73.12 on hand. Of the money advanced Brother Wendt, the secretary, has received \$160.64.

"The Committee recommends: (1) That we grant Brother Kleis

the requested release and assure him of our abiding love; (2) that he continue to represent our interest; (3) that, while we express our thankful appreciation for his efforts, we cannot fully sanction all his steps in view of the fact that according to our authorization he was to accept contributions for the treasury of the Synod and, without our permission, he also solicited funds for the erection of churches."

This Committee report was adopted with the provisions "that these matters not be made a part of the report on the convention to be published in the church papers but that the President and Secretary correspond with the Brother privately in these and related matters."

From a history of Zion Evangelical Lutheran Church, Johnstown, Pennsylvania, written in 1903, and from correspondence with a former Pastor of that congregation, we are fortunate to glean the following information:

"In September, 1852, Pastor Theobald Kleis came to Johnstown. Pastor Suhm, who had preached here for a number of German families, called his attention to the group. He decided to remain and serve them. An old English Brethren Church was rented and a congregation was organized. About 40 men were present and they pledged themselves to contribute regularly for the support of the Church from their monthly earnings. Pastor Kleis at once started a church record. The record of baptisms and marriages is still intact. The record of confirmations, communions, and burials was lost, perhaps in the flood of 1889.

"Soon after the organization of the congregation they resolved to build a church. A lot, on the corner of Locust and Jackson streets was bought for \$400.00. On this lot the first Zion Church was erected. On June 5, 1853 Pastor Kleis laid the cornerstone. The present church of the congregation is located at the same site. On June 26, 1853, Pastor Kleis confirmed the first class in the congregation.

"Pastor Kleis did not live to see the building completed. He died on October 7, 1853, at the age of 24 years and 8 days. His body was laid to rest in Levergood Cemetery on Vine Street, but later was transferred to the Sandvyle Cemetery. On the first plot to the left of the entrance a tombstone, placed there by the congregation on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the congregation, marks the place where the first Pastor of Zion Church sleeps, awaiting the great Resurrection Day."

There is a discrepancy between the information furnished by St. Chrichona and that inscribed on the tombstone. The latter says that he died at the age of 24. This would mean that he was only 21 years old when he came to Texas and exercised that fine leadership and missionary ability noted previously. His Alma Mater records state that he was born in 1826. This would mean that he was 24 years old when he came to Texas, that on July 25 before his death he observed his 27th birthday. But even so, if rated by human standards, we must say that for a man of such endearing personality, executive leadership, missionary talents and energy, he

was too young to be called out of the ranks of those engaged in planting the Kingdom of God on earth.

A fitting epitaph we find in the annual report of President Wendt which he read before the meeting of the Synod in Castroville on April 28, 1854, and in the action of those who knew the deceased. The record states

"The Lord has brought us sorrow through the removal of our dear Brother Kleis. He was no longer a member of our Synod, but still bound to us by bonds of brotherhood. The Lord has permitted this youthful, honest, and faithful servant to enter into His joy. Salvation is his! He has finished his course! Let us follow him! I ask those of you, my Brethren, who knew our Brother Kleis and who entertain such sentiments as I have expressed them, to witness this by rising."

And the secretary records: "All present arose."



GRAVE MARKER
Pastor T. G. Kleis, Johnstown, Pennsylvania

CHRISTOPH ADAM SAGER

Pastor C. A. Sager was born on April 3, 1826, at Dettingen, Wuertemberg, Germany. "As a child he did not care to play with other children He preferred to be alone and draw pictures. It was his childhood ambition to be an artist". After his confirmation, which also meant school graduation, he became a cabinet maker's apprentice. One day as he attended a Mission Day service he heard the call to foreign missions. But his family was not in a position to send him to some university's school of theology. Instead he enrolled at the Pilgrims' Mission training school, St. Chrischona, near Basel, Switzerland, on June 10, 1848. There he continued his studies and training till March 18, 1850.

Having passed the required theological examination, he and his classmate, Theobald Kleis, were ordained to the Lutheran ministry at Grenzach, Baden, Germany, on Judica Sunday, March 17, 1850. His Certificate

of Ordination, a prized possession of his descendants, reads as follows:

"Christoph Adam Sager of Dettingen in the kingdom of Wuertemberg, a student of the Pilgrims' Mission institute near Basel, was publicly and solemnly ordained as a teacher of the Gospel on Sunday Judica on the 17th of this month. The authorization was given by the Evangelical Consistory of the Grand-duchy of Baden on the 19th of the previous month, No. 2875. The ordination was conducted in the local church with the assistance of Candidate Guenzler of the Missionhouse in Basel. To attest this fact this certificate is executed and presented to him.

Grenzach, March 18, 1850
Evangelical Pastor
Rink

Attested:
Loerrach, March 20, 1850
Evangelical Dean of the Grand-duchy
Junker"

Following their ordination, he and Pastor Kleis were given some practical experience in church and school work at Wilhelmsdorf and in institutional work at Pfingstweide where Pastor Sager served temporarily as dean.

At a farewell gathering in Basel a book of devotional study, entitled "Himmels Blumen"—Flowers of Heaven—and written by Samuel Lucius, was presented to him. This book is also in the possession of his descendants. The inscription and dedication reads as follows:

"Christoph Adam Sager, student of the Pilgrims' Mission at St. Chrischona. Presented unto a blissful remembrance at the time of his departure for Texas at the Faelkle, Basel, August 16, 1850.

"Preach the Word; be instant in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine . . . But watch thou in all things, endure affliction, do the work of an evangelist, make proof of thy ministry . . . Christ has left us an example that we should follow in His footsteps, etc. Therefore: Be thou faithful unto death and thou shalt receive the crown of life! Amen."

Dated four days later, this document was added to his equipment:

"Those whose names are affixed below, verify that Christoph Adam Sager, who has been a student at the Pilgrims' Mission at St. Chrischona near Basel for approximately two years and who has pursued the study course of that institution sufficiently, has, after passing his examination, been ordained to the Gospel ministry upon authorization of the Consistory of the Grand-duchy of Baden by the Dean's appointee: the Right-venerable Pastor Rink in Grenzach. They also verify that in life and conduct he has demonstrated a truly Christian character, that in various branches of personal and social mission work he had demonstrated all due loyalty. He is now following a call to the state of Texas, one of the American free states, that there, in cooperation with a faithful associate from the same insti-

tution, he might begin an evangelical mission and work particularly among the Indians. The most cordial wishes of the administrators, teachers, and fellow students accompany him, as also their faith-filled prayers that the Lord might richly bless those who are henceforth to labor in His service.

St. Chrischona, August 20, 1850

The Teaching Staff

C. F. Schlenz

J. L. Schneller, Teacher and Dean

Markus Spittler, Cand. Theol.

In the name of the Pilgrims' Mission
at St. Chrischona

Christ. Fried. Spittler

as the oldest member of the Mission"

It must have been soon thereafter that Pastor Sager and his "faithful associate" sailed for Texas and, after the usual lapse of about two months, landed at Galveston. After a survey of Texas settlements in an interview with people to whom they had been referred in Galveston, the two went to Victoria. Soon thereafter Pastor Kleis went on to New Braunfels while Pastor Sager remained near Victoria.

But he did not remain there very long. Mr. William Schorlemmer of Meyersville brought him the urgent request of a group of Lutherans that he come and serve them. We glean more of the details from the historical records of that congregation:

"At that time the Chrischona Mission Society was sending' Pastors to Texas. One of them, by the name of Adam Sager, came here and was received by every Christian family with genuine hospitality. Pastor Sager desired to establish a congregation unto the Lord and so an Evangelical Lutheran congregation was organized. This fact was entered in the records at Clinton.

"It must be remembered that the small congregation had to struggle with poverty, sickness, and similar circumstances and therefore could not bring big offerings for church buildings or for the support of the Pastor. Since he, for this reason, could not have his living from the Gospel, as the Word of the Lord declares that he should, Mr. Sager was dependent on self-help for his livelihood Under his leadership the cemetery was acquired and a fence built around it as the resting place of our dead. He also introduced the custom of free-will offerings on Sundays. The proceeds were applied to making improvements on the church property Pastor Sager labored in the congregation for four years, from 1850 to 1854. He bade the congregation farewell on New Year's day, 1855, with a sermon on the word of Sacred Scripture: 'Grace be unto you all. Amen.'"

Though no written records prevail to substitute the claim, nevertheless it is a fact that from Meyersville Pastor Sager made missionary contacts and conducted services in Yorktown, Goliad, and for a while in Victoria.

In an interview with one of his daughters we learned of such bits of biographical interest as these. In the first days of his stay in Meyersville, Pastor Sager lived first with one family and then another. His trunk and box of books were built on a sled so that they might the easier be taken from place to place. Since room in the homes of that day was at a premium, the sled and its chests usually stood out-of-doors, in all weather, causing damage and loss of contents. On July 1, 1853, he and Miss Justine Sophia Dreier were married. For several years she had been teaching Sunday school, teaching the ABC's and Bible stories. The marriage was performed by his good friend, Pastor Strobel from Victoria. To this union nine children were born, one died in infancy, one in early childhood, and three are still living. Surely it was a great day in his life when his father, mother, sister, and twin brothers arrived from Europe to make their home in Meyersville; and a sad day when only one of those brothers returned home at the close of the Civil War.

When Pastor Sager left Meyersville in the beginning of 1855, he returned to the scenes of his first missionary activity at Victoria. Pastor Strobel, who had served there for several years, had gone on to serve in another field. But the several records are confusing and conflicting. The Minutes of the Synod list his address as Victoria from 1855 to 1859. The Victoria church records show marriage entries from December 28, 1854, to February 23, 1859. According to the Minutes of the Synod he continued his services there till Christmas 1859. Thus far all is well and good. But at the same time the sparse congregational records at Victoria speak of him as "assisting in the vacancy" and as "the provisional pastor."

There is another clue to the situation. We know that a preaching place was begun at Spring Creek in 1853. In that day that was a strong settlement about two and a half miles north-west of Victoria. It was also known as Spring Branch. We also know that the second of the children were born in Victoria in 1856 and that the third and fourth of the children were born at Spring Creek in 1858 and 1860. Is it possible that for two years or so Pastor Sager lived in Victoria and served both places as provisional pastor, and at the same time plied his former trade as carpenter and cabinet maker to support his family? Is it possible that when the work at Spring Creek developed, he established himself in that settlement and continued to serve in the vacancy at Victoria?

With his discontinuation of the work in the Victoria area at the end of 1859, the thread of recorded activity gets even thinner, and that for about eight years. The 1860 Minutes of the Synod do not list his name. In 1862 he is not mentioned as among those present or among those absent. Because of the Civil War no conventions were held in 1863 and 1864. The Minutes of 1865 list him as one of those present at the convention at Victoria; they report his attendance at the Pastoral Conference meetings in 1863 and 1864; they report that at the request of the Pastor at Yorktown he was conducting two services per month in the Calheins Settlement; and his address is given as "Colletto"—and there were several settlements up and down the Coletto Creek. The Minutes of 1866 do not mention him. In 1867 we find him in attendance at the annual convention of the Synod in Meyersville. His address is given as Clinton, at that time the county seat

and located several miles south of Cuero. But the statistical report says: no congregation, no members, six baptisms, 24 communions, one wedding, and two preaching stations.

And now perhaps a final clue to the entire situation. We know that lack of sufficient income was a prime reason with him for leaving Meyersville. We know from a legal document that on August 4, 1857, "in consideration of two hundred dollars paid in hand" he sold a stated "building lot with improvements situated in the town proper of Victoria". This was the time, as suggested above, that the family moved from Victoria out to Spring Creek. We also know that in the latter of these obscure years he bought a 150-acre farm near Arneckeville and built a home thereon. Private correspondence clinches the assumption that during those years he turned to his carpentry and cabinet maker's profession, possibly also to farming, in support of his growing family; and that at the same time he served, "assisting in the vacancy" "as the provisional pastor", as near-at-hand need and occasion provided an opportunity.

With 1868 the record becomes clear again. The first observation is not a happy one. Pastor Sager seems never to have been very closely associated with the Synod and its work. Of the sixteen conventions he might have attended he attended only five, and, with one exception, they were those that convened in his immediate vicinity. The fact that he divided his time and efforts, and the fact that others tried to persuade him to give full time to the ministry, caused irritations. This situation came to a head at the convention of 1868. At that time a committee reported: "Pastor A. Sager complains that he has been unfairly dealt with by the President and requests his release". The convention's investigation led to the conviction that the charges brought against the President were unfounded. Nevertheless, the requested release was granted. At the following year's convention a committee reported that Pastor Sager had protested against the removal of his name from the membership list of the Synod's pastors. The previous Synod's action was ratified however.

The second observation is a happier one, brief but beautiful, as it proved to be, like the evening's sunset. Some years before, his father had died and was buried at Meyersville. In the meantime his sister had married and was living in Arneckeville. His mother and brother had gone there too, to make their home. The record of the congregation in that community tells the rest of the story:

"Our Evangelical Lutheran Zion Church in Arneckeville was established by Pastor C. A. Sager. Those who had settled here experienced that the distance to Meyersville was too great. They requested him to serve them with the Word and the Sacraments, and to take over the instruction of the children. He organized the congregation in 1868 with ten families of the Lutheran persuasion. Already on November 1 of that year the young congregation could dedicate its little church. But already in the following year the great Lord of the harvest called His faithful servant to His home above. Pastor Sager died on August 27, 1869, of typhoid fever".

He was only 43 years old and his grave is in the cemetery of the Arneckeville congregation.

The plot of ground on which the church was built was donated by the Pastor's brother, Michael. In the erection of the house of worship Pastor Sager took an active part, his experience as a building craftsman served the cause well. And nearby was the farm he had bought, and his own home. On one side of this "parsonage" was a special room, though it was but a lean-to with a thatched roof. In it was a table and chair, a bed and a lamp. This was provided for pastors who came to visit or who passed there on their travels.

As his epitaph we may quote from the annual report of the President of the Synod in 1870.

"As we think of the events of the past year we observe that we have experienced the goodness of God as well as His severity. I think first of our Brother, C. Sager, at five-mile-Coleta, De Witt County. The Lord over life and death called him unexpectedly to the higher home in August, 1869. May our God, mysterious and yet faithful, prove His nearness to the severely stricken widow and orphans."

This too deserves to be said, and in the spirit of a tribute. Of the eight pioneers of the Synod, Pastor Christoph Adam Sager is the only one who has descendants who are serving in the ministry of the Church in Texas today. Two grandsons and two great-grandsons are thus dedicated, and a third great-grandson is preparing himself for that service. One of the great-grandsons, through his ministry in the field of Mexican Missions, might in a sense be said to be carrying out the charge given to Pastor Sager, namely "to work particularly among the Indians".



GRAVE MARKER

Pastor and Mrs. C. A. Sager, Arneckeville, Texas

CASPAR BRAUN

Pastor Caspar Braun was born in Botenheim, Wuerttemberg, Germany on March 16, 1822. Data from St. Chrischona tells us that he attended that missionary training institute for a very brief period, from February 2, 1847 to March 11, 1847. A letter, in the possession of a grandson, is addressed to: "Student Caspar Braun, Basel" and bears the note "received on September 8, 1845." It is a letter from his home pastor in which he answered Student Braun's questions on personal, moral, and spiritual problems. Another letter is the pastor's reply to the student's suggestion that, in view of prevailing world conditions, the return of Christ might be at hand, and an answer to his question: "How shall we prepare ourselves for that day?"

We do not try to harmonize the two dates on student life. Did he perhaps attend some other professional school in Basel? His later practices in other professional fields suggest that theology was not his only interest. Was his brief stay at St. Chrischona intended only to bring him and that institution and organization into a mutual acquaintance? It might seem so.

In 1846 St. Chrischona had sent its first two "pilgrims" to the mission fields in the United States, to serve among the many German immigrants. In 1847 three more were sent. Caspar Braun was one of those.

It was not till 1850 that St. Chrischona resolved to concentrate its efforts on Texas.

He evidently arrived sometime during the summer or early fall of that year. The record reads:

"Pastor Caspar Braun was admitted to the Pittsburg Synod in 1847; parish: Beaver and New Castle; he was licensed in 1847-1849 and ordained in 1850; moved to Texas 1850."

Of his work in Beaver, Pennsylvania, we read:

"The Germans of Beaver and vicinity were organized into a congregation by Pastor Jacob Hoelche of the Ohio Synod as early as 1835. It was a free church—a union organization of Lutheran and Reformed—and Lutheran pastors found it hard to serve. This congregation was finally made the nucleus of the Beaver Mission, established by the Pittsburg Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church, in 1847. The first pastor of the Mission was Rev. Caspar Braun, who suffered many indignities, and was compelled to resign in 1850."

Of his work in New Castle, Pennsylvania, we read:

"St. Paul's Church was organized in the historic city of New Castle on the 28th day of August, 1848, by the missionary pastor, the Rev. Caspar Braun of the Pittsburg Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church. Rev. C. Braun, located at Beaver, was commissioned to preach the first sermon on the 10th day of September, 1848, in the West School house. The first Church Council was elected and organized on the 8th day of October and installed by the Pastor on

November 5, 1848. The establishment of this Mission Church was attended by many difficulties of various natures: the extreme poverty of the settlers, the hatred against the oppressor in Europe, and the attendant expenses resulting from building the church edifice. Through the removal of families to other parts of the surrounding territory, and other difficulties, it seemed for a time as if the mission work had to be discontinued. The Rev. C. Braun resigned, and the congregation accepted the resignation on December 23, 1849. The missionary pastor moved to Texas."

From notes on a series of hand-written sermons we see that he extended his pastoral and missionary services to Butler, Harmony, Zillenople, Freedom, Rochester and other places.

Pastor Braun's advent to Texas we introduce with a quotation from a pastor in his native land, dated December, 1851: "I had heard that you were no more so serious, but I could not believe it; my confidence is restored. That you, dear Brother, in response to the pressing request, decided to bring the Word of Life to those desiring it and sacrificed yourself to make this long trip, that pleases me."

It must have been early in 1850 when he made "this long trip" by boat from some Pennsylvania port to Galveston and on to Houston. In an earlier chapter of this story we heard that as early as 1839 Pastor L. C. Ervendberg had served the German immigrants there. Whether others carried on the work when he left a year later, whether anything was left of this early organization when Pastor Braun arrived in 1850, or whether he had to lay a new foundation, is difficult to say. The detailed story of the first beginnings of his work have not been preserved.

Later records state: "The first meetings and services were held in a school house near Christ Episcopal Church on Texas Avenue. On July 1, 1851 he organized the First Evangelical Lutheran Church which was incorporated on September 2. The first communion service was celebrated on July 13, and was attended by 34 persons. The first confirmation class was received into membership on February 8, 1852."

Members continued to meet in the school house until 1854 when a frame church building was erected. It stood on the south side of Texas Avenue facing west on Milam street. Immediately behind the church was the school building where Pastor Braun conducted a Christian day school. The dedication of the new building, and a communion service were held on Christmas Day 1854. Fifty-one members were present. The present day continuation of the congregation is found in the First Evangelical Church of Houston, and through a separation that occurred in 1879, in the Trinity Lutheran Church of that city.

One of those who attended that first communion service was Miss Margaret Bohmert. Her mother was "Little Flower", daughter of an Indian chief, her father a former ship captain who had fallen in the battle at San Jacinto. Miss Bohmert and another young lady were teachers at the school where Pastor Braun's congregation assembled. In 1851 she be-

came the Pastor's wife. As the grandson relates the story, "They went to Galveston to get married because there was no Lutheran minister here, but the return of the marriage license was recorded in Harris County." To this union were born two daughters and six sons. The City Directory of that day carries this information: "Braun, Rev. C., pastor Lutheran Church, residence Austin between Commerce and Franklin streets."

From family and recorded sources we learn that Pastor Braun was a man of many talents and evidently trained abilities.

"His contributions to the early development of Houston were manifold. He was a preacher, pastor, school teacher, physician, lawyer, immigration and colonization agent, and a real social worker who looked after the needy regardless of belief, language, or any other differences." As evidence of this social work we quote, "Yellow fever killed many a father and mother in those days. Pastor Braun's home often resembled an orphanage."

His ministry extended beyond Houston and Harris County.

In an earlier section of this story, that told of the organization meeting of the First Evangelical Lutheran Synod in Texas on November 10, 11, 12, 1851, we learned of the very important part Pastor Braun played in those eventful days. He welcomed the five pastors who had arrived in Galveston from Europe but a few days before. He and his congregation were hosts to the seven men who participated in the organization meeting. He secured the use of the First Presbyterian Church as a meeting place. He was elected chairman of the preliminary assembly that discussed the advisability of creating a formal organization. He supplied the Constitution of the Pittsburgh Synod of the Evangelical Lutheran Church which served as a blueprint for the Constitution that was adopted. He was elected to serve as the first President of the Synod and presided over its first convention. When a committee, instructed to write the introductory confessional paragraph for the Constitution, came up with a statement that was unsatisfactory to the group and the group added the President to the committee, a statement was written and adopted that was as soundly Lutheran as only one other Lutheran church body in America had provided.

He presided at the Second Convention of the Synod in Victoria, May 22-24, 1852, and was again elected to serve as president.

At the Third Convention, held in Galveston on April 14-16, 1853, his Houston congregation provided the Synod's first lay delegate, Mr. F. Burkhardt. A system of rotation in office brought another to the presidency but Pastor Braun was elected to serve in the next highest office, as secretary.

In the further proceedings of the convention we read of two strange episodes. A Methodist pastor of eloquent speech addressed the convention and "pleaded for unity of spirit and a striving toward the same goal, emphasizing that we battle with united strength against the common foe of unbelief and superstition." Thereupon Pastor Braun recommended "that the two denominations establish cordial relationships, that the Presi-

dent of the Synod publish an article on Lutheran doctrine in the WESLEYAN BANNER, stating that all approaches and contacts from that group would be met with love and peace." In a later session an invitation was extended by a spokesman of the General Synod of the Lutheran Church in America that the Texas Synod affiliate itself with that larger organization. The discussion developed three advantages of such a move: a connection with the organized Lutheran Church in America, financial support, and an added source for the supply of men for the Texas mission field. When the Synod voted to apply for membership in that Lutheran group, Pastor Braun tendered his resignation as a member of the Synod.

Several years of silence pass. In 1857 we learn from the Synod's Minutes that for a short time one of the newly-arrived men from St. Chrichona served him as an assistant teacher and pastor. The next reference to him is in the Minutes of 1860. He attended the convention of the Synod assembled in Round Top. He was temporarily received as an associate member. He was appointed, like others, to serve on a convention committee. He applied for restoration to full membership in the Synod. Action on his application was postponed to the following year so that he might first secure an honorable release from membership in the Pittsburgh Synod. For some reason he broke off all ties with the Synod thereafter, even several efforts at contacts by correspondence went unanswered.

He next turned his attention to the Missouri Synod and was received as a member in 1876. This relationship came to a sad end in 1879 when, on basis of charges filed by 22 members of his congregation, he was dismissed from membership in that Synod and from the ministry. When he refused to give up his congregational connection, the dissenting members withdrew to form another congregation.

By this time the strain of the years of his multiple services, his pioneer experiences with their struggle, privation and exposure, disappointments and heartaches were beginning to bear down on him. On October 14, 1880, he was to conduct a funeral service. Having made the necessary preparations, he sat down on the porch, Bible in hand, to wait for his usual driver to come after him. When the driver pulled up in front of the house he called to him. There was no response. Pastor Caspar Braun was dead. His grave and weather-beaten tombstone are in Houston's Glenwood Cemetery.

JOHANN HEINRICH BRASCHLER

Pastor Braschler was born in Switzerland in 1818, and was educated at the University of Bern. Prior to his coming to Texas he was a teacher and superintendent somewhere in that country. He came to America in 1848, but whether he came directly to Texas or by way of eastern and northern states we do not know. Only this we know, on the voyage he lost all his possessions in a shipwreck.

He appears upon the scene of our interest as a candidate of theology, that is as an unordained pastor, in the Spring Creek settlement which was 25 miles north-west of Houston. The community is known as Rose Hill

today, near Tomball. He seems to have been associated with Pastor Caspar Braun of Houston. It is even possible that he secured him for the settlers in that community, and that he coached him in his studies and work.

He was with Pastor Braun when the five St. Chrischona men arrived from Galveston on Saturday evening, November 8, 1851. He was present and participated in the organization of the First Evangelical Lutheran Synod in Texas on the following Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. But, instead of returning to his congregation at Spring Creek, he announced that he would have to find a more remunerative occupation so that he might replace the loss he suffered at sea. One of the newly arrived men, Pastor J. G. Ebinger, remained to continue the work at Spring Creek.

How did his venture in the world of business or labor work out? Did he, in the providence of God, find it to be a closed door for him? Or was he so successful that, when his economic damage was repaired, he was constrained by heart and conscience to return to his first professional love? Be that the one way or the other, we know that when the Synod met for its Second Convention, at Victoria in May, 1852, he was present and requested that his license as pastor be renewed. The request was granted. At the close of the convention he went with Pastor Kleis to become his successor at Neighborsville-Hortontown.

It was not an easy field that he was entering, even though for two years it had been under the care of so energetic and winsome a man as was Pastor Kleis. But with patience and steadfast purpose he pursued the goal. As the records of the congregation show, he served during the first year as teacher and pastor "under a contract". When the members failed to organize as a congregation in the annual meeting, in August 1853, the contract was renewed. Then finally in the third year, on August 13, 1854, a formal congregational organization under a constitution was set up by unanimous vote. Of deep interest and importance are the following excerpts.

"The name of our congregation is and shall remain: Evangelical Lutheran Saint Martins Congregation. It embraces both settlements, Neighborsville and Hortontown.

"We acknowledge the documented Lutheran Confessions and lay special stress on the Augsburg Confession as the great symbol of the Reformation.

"Before assuming office, the pastor must present a Certificate of Ordination, or a License, to the Church Council. These papers must show that he is a member of the First Evangelical Lutheran Synod in Texas or of a Lutheran Synod in one of the other States of the Union."

In the spring of that year, 1854, he attended the Fourth Convention of the Synod at Castroville. In those days it was the rule that men who were licensed to serve a congregation had to renew their application for a license each year. Such an application was accompanied by several written sermons, a written report on some assigned subject, and a diary of the past year's activities. In the Minutes of the Ministerial Session of the Castroville convention we read: "The papers of Candidate H. Braschler and

... were before the Ministerium. They were examined. Those of Brother Braschler were not only satisfactory, but they exceeded our expectation. It was therefore agreed that he be ordained without further examination." On that same Monday evening, May 2, he was ordained in the closing service of the convention.

At the Fifth Convention, held at Fredericksburg in the spring of 1855, he was elected to serve as "President pro-tempore", since the President was unable to attend. The same convention elected him to serve as treasurer for the following year.

In the President's annual report to the convention of 1858 we read: "On September 9 Brother Braschler announced that he was relinquishing his post and that after October 8 he would be departing for the northern states". Another reference says: "Under date of January 25 Brother Braschler informed me that he had found an appointment in McKeesport, Pennsylvania. He also requested that he be given a release from membership in our Synod. I supplied him with the same." This information is corroborated by this statement, in the handwriting of his successor, in the records of the St. Martin church at Neighborsville: "On the 27th of September, 1857, on the 16th Sunday after Trinity, Pastor Heinrich Braschler delivered his farewell sermon."

Our final glimpse of the Brother we glean from the annals of the Pittsburg Lutheran Synod: "He was licensed in 1858, supplied the McKeesport, German Church; was removed to Indiana in 1859." It is said that he served a congregation near Evansville.

HEINRICH WENDT

Pastor Heinrich Wendt was born on April 23, 1825, in Osnabrueck, Westphalia, Germany. Of his home and family, or of the years of his youth and young manhood, we have no information. On November 12, 1849, he enrolled at the Pilgrims' Mission training school, St. Chrischona, at Basel, Switzerland, and pursued his studies and missionary service there till September 1, 1851. On June 29 of that year he and five classmates were ordained to the Lutheran ministry at Loerrach.

Following their ordination they spent some time in various congregations to get more practical experience. In a Sunday afternoon service in Wilhelmsdorf Pastor Wendt was the speaker. His text was Luke 10:38-40, and his theme was: "One Thing Is Needful". One who was present in that service wrote, "He had the closest attention and moved us deeply. Even the prisoners who were present from Lindendorf were heard to say on the way home, 'He surely did hit us'."

On September 2, 1851, he and his five classmates boarded the Frankska at Bremen and on November 5 they landed at Galveston. There they had a conference with the seven-family congregation that had been organized early that year by Pastor G. F. Guebner. Since that Pastor had gone on soon after the congregation had been set up, to continue his mission survey tour on behalf of the Lutheran Synod of South Carolina, these

families requested that one of these six men remain to serve them. Their prayerful deliberation resulted in designating Pastor Wendt as the one who should accept the call. He acceded to the decision. We can well imagine the pain of parting he experienced when he was left behind and the others went on to Houston enroute to Pastor Kleis near New Braunfels.

As happy as it was unexpected was his reunion with them but a few days later. When the other five, together with Pastors Braun and Braschler in Houston, decided that it would be best to set up a formal church organization they notified Pastor Wendt. He arrived upon the scene in time to participate on the last day of the deliberation, and so qualified as one of the organizers of the First Evangelical Lutheran Synod in Texas. Following those days, he returned to Galveston. There he set to work in the manner, under the circumstances, and with the results which are portrayed in that section of the next chapter of this story that relates some of the personal experience of some of these pioneer pastors.

Pastor Wendt was a man of outstanding and recognized ability. At the Second Convention, at Victoria in 1852, he was elected to serve as secretary of the Synod. At the Third Convention, in his own congregation in Galveston in 1853, he was elected to serve as president. The same convention authorized him to attend the convention of the General Synod of the Lutheran Church in America which was to meet in Winchester, Pennsylvania, there to effect the affiliation of the Synod in Texas with that body.

In the record of the Fourth Convention, at Castroville in 1854, the full stature of the man comes to view. His president's report covers ten pages of the Minutes. Similar reports by others at the previous conventions cover a bare half and three-fourths pages respectively. In the report we find a man of sympathetic nature toward his brethren, and yet he did not hesitate to point out their common weakness. He revealed understanding and devotion to the heart of Biblical truth. He gloried in the values of the Lutheran heritage. With eloquence he called upon his brethren to rise to the challenge of their glorious, responsible, God-given task in Texas. He revealed his acquaintance with the problems and opportunities throughout the Synod. There was a joyful heartthrob in his report of his attendance at the meeting of the General Synod. There was righteous indignation as he reported on his action in meeting slanderous charges that had been made against the Synod and some of its members. He had a plan for the establishment of an auxiliary organization in support of the mission work of the Synod in Texas and that of the General Synod. He had a plan for the establishment of a much needed "classical and theological institute". He had a plan for a church paper to serve the special needs of the State. His was a report that makes good reading even today.

The spirit that carried the President carried the convention as well. There was a new joy in the service of the Master. There was a new vision for the future. There was a positive action on the President's proposals all along the line. And when the ballots were cast it is small wonder that the Synod returned her aggressive President to office.

And what eyes, heart, and eloquent pen he had for the cause of mis-

sions. In his correspondence with the authorities at St. Chrischona, dated in those years, his pleading for more workers was most impressive. He called attention to nine centers of crying need in Texas. He had information on New Orleans, Alabama, Iowa, California, Mexico and the Amazon regions of South America. And he was not overlooking the need and opportunity for Negro missions in Texas.

For some unknown reason Pastor Wendt did not attend the next convention of the Synod, at Fredericksburg in 1855. He was nevertheless re-elected for a third term, the limit under the Constitution, and was the first man to be so honored.

In the minutes of the following convention, held at Comaltown in 1856, we read another annual report from his pen. It was rather brief, covering a bit more than a page. He spoke only of the past. He had no proposals for the future. The old pulse-beat was there, but energy was confined.

"Beloved Brethren in the Lord! With thanksgiving to God and the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who is also our Father, we are again assembled. He has been good to us and to our Church. In spite of our many errors He has not cast us off, but has carried us with patience. Therefore let us praise God 'who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases'. But we must also humble ourselves. Because of our lack of faith and love we bear the blame that so much injustice has been done and God's blessings were withheld from many interests As we stand at the beginning of another synodical year let us look with praise and repentance on the past, let us rally anew around the banner of the cross and the Confessions of our Church, let us permit 'the bond of perfectness' to entwine us. Then, with that united and individual strength that God has deposited in us, let us labor mightily at the building of Zion. The Lord is near! And with Him is His anger upon the slothful servant, but also His reward for him who is true."

Three years he had served as president. The Constitution allowed no more. But he was elected to the second highest office, secretary.

In the report of the acting president, presented at the convention at Frelsburg in 1857, we read as follows:

"The most surprising news of all reached us in the first days of February. As though carried on the wings of a stormwind, Brother Wendt was arranging to return to the homeland. The surprising element was the suddenness of the decision, the immediateness of the departure, and under circumstances that were unpredicted. The purpose of the trip we shall state in his own words: to labor for the Kingdom of God and for Texas in particular, and to take care of some personal interests."

From other sources we learn that his personal interests included medical attention. From other sections of the 1857 Minutes we learn that Pastor Wendt and his family had arrived safely in Bremen; that a letter written by him, prior to his departure, for circulation among the mem-

bers of the Synod, contained matters that caused disturbance; that the officials of the Synod were instructed to notify Pastor Wendt that he had no authority to solicit funds for the Synod during his stay in Europe. The Minutes of the 1858 Convention report that Pastor Wendt had returned to America, had accepted a congregation in New Hanover, Pennsylvania, and that his request for an honorable release from membership in the Synod had finally been granted.

An evidence of his sudden departure from Galveston can still be seen in the fact that the Minutes of the Comaltown convention of 1856 were never completely entered in the official record. He had been elected secretary at that time. Only the proceedings of the first day's two sessions were entered. At the 1857 convention Pastor Wendt's original notes were read "to the extent that that was possible". It evidently was someone's good intention to complete the unfinished work. Almost nine pages were left blank for that purpose. But they are still blank.

Dare we try reading between the lines, analyzing what we seem to observe? A charitable construction on all involved might prompt us to say that here was a man who was ahead of his times. Did others look too much to things as they were? Did he look too much on things as they might become? Was his vision visionary? Did his striving and driving to make dreams come true disturb and offend those who could not lift their sights to those heights on which he focused his vision? If this was the case, Pastor Wendt has many fellow sufferers. He was caught, pinched, and ground between the anxious, active spirit that was in him and the hard, grim realities that confronted him in his slow-moving associates and the poverty-marked conditions of life in Texas in his day. But more! There is reason to believe that when his proposals and methods met with a negative or contradictory attitude, he could be sullen or rash in his reaction.

After all the above was written, information came through that enables us to carry the story of Pastor Wendt's life forward by another chapter. But what a chapter! Here it is as stated in **THE HISTORY OF THE LUTHERAN CHURCH IN NEW HANOVER**.

"Henry Wendt came to Pennsylvania in 1858 and took charge of the Swamp or New Hanover parish. This consisted of New Hanover, Keelers, Boyerstown, Hill Church, and Sassamansville. After a few years he gave up the latter two and took charge of Pennsburg instead, but served there only a short time. He also served at Pottstown a part of the time, if not all the time.

"At the close of 1864 or early in 1865 he became superintendent of the orphans' home in Germantown. But in 1867 strange and shocking reports concerning his conduct came to the President of the Synod. The accused called on him and confessed his wrongdoing, but denied the gravest charges. After a full investigation of the affair, the President proclaimed his suspension in the church papers. The Board of Managers had him arrested. He was tried in Philadelphia, found guilty, and sentenced to imprisonment for a number of years. What became of him afterwards is not known. There were rumors that after the expiration of his term he returned to his native

land. It certainly was a sad ending of a promising career. The man certainly was gifted."

"How are the mighty fallen!" But shall the storm of the evening cause us to forget the brightness of the morning or the service accomplished in the noonday hours? "As each saint has a past, so may each sinner yet have a future".

JOHANN GEORG EBINGER

Pastor Johann Georg Ebinger was born at Plieningen near Stuttgart, Wuerttemberg, Germany, on March 11, 1828. Of his family, early life, or preliminary training and experience we have no information.

He enrolled at the Pilgrims' Mission training school, St. Chrischona, near Basel, Switzerland, on July 5, 1849 and was with the school till July 1, 1851. With his five classmates, destined for Texas, he was ordained on June 29, 1851, at Loerrach. With them he received practical experience in congregational work in one or several congregations for a period of about three months.

On September 2, 1851, they boarded the Franziska at Bremen. On November 5, they landed at Galveston. Following the conference with local Lutherans, he and his associates bade farewell to Pastor Heinrich Wendt, and went on to Houston. There he participated in the organization of the First Evangelical Lutheran Synod in Texas.

During those days in Houston Pastor Heinrich Braschler informed the other pastors that he would not be able to continue his work at Spring Creek. He had lost all his belongings in a shipwreck enroute to Texas and felt the need of entering some more gainful occupation, for a while at least, so that he might replace his lost necessities. In consequence of this development a conference on the situation was held. The outcome was that Pastor Ebinger was designated to assume the vacancy.

We are informed that the records of his activities and experiences have been lost. But we do have his rather detailed letters to the St. Chrischona authorities which are quoted in the section on personal experiences in the next chapter of this story. The congregation he thus inherited and cultivated under such difficult conditions today finds its lines of descendants in the Salem Evangelical Lutheran Church of Rose Hill near Tomball. The congregation belongs to the Missouri Synod.

Pastor Ebinger must have conducted extensive missionary tours far beyond the immediate bounds of his parish. A man of such consecration and determination, as we see depicted in the above mentioned letter, could not do otherwise. Accordingly we learn from the records of the Salem Church, near Brenham:

"On December 24, 1854, Pastor Johann Georg Ebinger conducted the first Lutheran service in Washington County. He was visiting various communities in that area, in search of Lutheran immigrants.

While there he was invited to preach and conduct Lutheran services. So during that Christmas season he preached several times to groups that gathered for services.

"On July 1, 1855, the first Lutheran Church was dedicated in Washington County and the first Lutheran congregation was organized. The historic event took place in the Berlin community. The name selected for the church and congregation was Eben Ezer.

"In 1856 a division in the congregation was experienced. One part and Pastor Ebinger thereafter organized Salem Lutheran church. On November 22, 1856, the corner stone was laid for the new church which included the parsonage, under one roof. On March 8, 1857, this building was dedicated by Pastor Ebinger."

This information is corroborated by data gathered from the Minutes of the Synod. In the roll call of the Fourth Convention, at Castroville in 1854, his postoffice is listed as Spring Creek, Harris County. His annual report listed one congregation, forty members, eight baptisms, ten confirmations, thirty communions, two weddings, three funerals, no church building, one week-day school, one offering of \$3.00. The roll call of the next convention at Fredericksburg in 1855, lists his address as Brenham, with one congregation, one hundred members, eleven confirmations, eighty-five communions, one wedding, two funerals, one church and one station. A footnote by the secretary, commenting on the Synod's extension during the year, includes the statement: "Brother Ebinger in Brenham and a station in Independence." But he did not desert his first charge when he took on this new field. He continued his Spring Creek work for several years, till another pastor arrived to take it over.

Pastor Ebinger took an active part in the work of the Synod and his ability was recognized in the larger field of the church's work. At the Fifth Convention, in Fredericksburg in 1855, he was elected to the second highest office, secretary. At the Seventh Convention, at Frelsburg in 1857, he was elected president. In the following year he and his Salem congregation were hosts to the convention of the Synod. His president's report, covering five pages, reveals him to have been a man of good administrative judgment, with sympathy for the brethren, an earnest, urgent sense of responsibility for the cause of God, and a fine sense of personal humility. At that convention he was elected treasurer, to which office he was returned at the next two conventions. Thereupon the Eleventh Convention, meeting in Quilhi in 1861, returned him to the office of president. He did not get to serve in that capacity very long however, as we shall see.

Some time after the convention of 1859 Pastor Ebinger received a call to the congregation in Galveston. On January 2, 1860, he left Salem to accept the call. Here he served for about a year and a half. In the President's report, heard at Ross Prairie in 1862, we read: "Soon after last year's convention, our President had to give up his congregation in Galveston. A serious condition affecting her eyesight settled upon his beloved wife. Consequently they found themselves constrained to return to Europe to consult a doctor."

He did not return to Texas. But he continued his ministry. His heart's interest and special talents led him to serve as missionary in Zurich, Switzerland. Later he served as assistant to the chaplain at the Deaconess home and training school in Zurich. He died on January 24, 1908.

PHILIPP FRIEDRICH ZIZELMANN

Pastor Zizelmann was born on October 10, 1824, at Kleebrohn, Wuertemberg, Germany. Of his family and early background we have no information. From November 11, 1847 to July 8, 1851, he studied at St. Chrischona, near Basel, Switzerland, and was associated with the program of Pilgrims' Mission, the sponsoring organization. On June 29, 1851, he and five associates were ordained to the Lutheran ministry at nearby Loerach. Following their ordination they were given final training and practical experience in various congregations for a period of about three months.

On September 2, 1851, they boarded the Franziska at Bremen and landed at Galveston on November 5. From there they, with the exception of Pastor H. Wendt, went to Houston. There Pastor Zizelmann participated in the organization of the First Evangelical Lutheran Synod in Texas. He was elected to serve as the Synod's first secretary. Anyone who has an opportunity to see the original copy of the Constitution that was adopted and the Minutes of that organization meeting will quickly observe the beautiful handwriting in which he entered that valuable information in the official record. A second time, in 1857, the Synod conferred upon him the honor and responsibility of that office.

He was one of the four who rode the stage coach from Houston to La Grange. In fact it is his Christmas Eve report to St. Chrischona authorities that has given us the interesting account of that trip. When various individuals in La Grange requested that one of them remain and serve them, it was he who responded to the request. The experiences he made there during his short stay, his trying experiences from January 6, 1852, to August 13 of that year, when he labored to launch the mission in San Antonio, are given in detail in that section of the next chapter of this story. There we relate the personal experiences of several of these pioneers.

After his recuperation from a siege of typhoid fever, during his stay of three weeks near Quilhi, he went into the hill country, to Fredericksburg, in search of further restoration to health and strength. In doing this he was also answering the call extended to the Synod earlier in the year by a group living up there. They had requested that "a truly pious Lutheran pastor be sent to them as soon as possible".

He was present at the Third Convention of the Synod, at Galveston in 1853. This was the convention that decided that the Synod should apply for membership in the General Synod of the Lutheran Church in America, and that the president, Pastor H. Wendt, attend the forthcoming convention of that body in that interest. Pastor Zizelmann was "drafted" by the Synod to remain in Galveston till the middle of June to serve the congregation in the absence of its pastor. A letter was sent to the congregation

in Fredericksburg explaining the situation, and assuring the members that their pastor would be returned to them in due time.

Pastor Zizelmann did not attend the stirring convention in Castroville in 1854. But, in the reports made on the development of the work in the various congregations, it was stated that "Brother Zizelmann reports that the building of the church is making rapid progress and that he expects to be able to preach in the new house of worship in the very near future".

In the following year Pastor Zizelmann and his Zion congregation were host to the Fifth Convention of the Synod on April 19 to 23. In the meantime difficulties had developed and much of the time of the convention was consumed in investigating the charges made by the Pastor and by certain members of the congregation, and in trying to bring about a peaceful settlement. Such a solution seemed possible on Saturday morning. But on Monday morning the Pastor expressed his conviction that he could no longer serve there and that he would relinquish the office. The convention approved his action and announcement was made that the congregation would elect a successor and that any pastor interested in receiving the call might give notice to that effect. In the service of that same evening the newly elected pastor was installed into office.

Another outstanding event of that year's convention was one of the evening services. It was a service conducted in the English language—the Synod's first—and that in Fredericksburg!

For Pastor Zizelmann there was one outstanding day of happy memories and associations in those last months of his residence in the hill country. On January 1, 1855, he was united in marriage with Miss Christiane Barbara Schlotterbeck. Together they went to Schumansville to live and serve. This was a community along the Guadalupe below New Braunfels. It must have been quite an active field, for the Minutes of the 1856 convention not only report the presence of Pastor Zizelmann but also that of a parochial school teacher. During the year and a half that he served here their first child was born, a son who died two years later in San Antonio. Three others sons were born to them in San Antonio and two daughters joined the family after they left the State.

But we are getting ahead of the story of his church activity. Here it is as written by Pastor Zizelmann, in the record of St. John Lutheran Church in San Antonio.

"In 1856 the Synod decided that the work in San Antonio should be taken up again. Pastor Zizelmann was asked to return to his former field. This he did on October 15. The Home Mission Council of the General Synod had been asked to grant its customary two-year support to the undertaking. This was assured. The City Council was petitioned and permission was given that services might be conducted in the public school on Sunday and on special occasions. The first service was a happy occasion for the attendance at the worship was much better than had been expected.

"In spite of two crop failures the group dared take steps toward organizing a congregation. This was done on December 26, 1857. On that day 44 men signed their names to the constitution, three weeks later the number had been increased to 66.

"Immediately arrangements were made for a parochial school which opened its doors on March 1, 1858. For more than a year the Pastor conducted the school. During the winter months classes were conducted from eight o'clock to eleven in the morning and from two to four in the afternoon; during the summer from seven to ten and from three to five. In preparation for the second year a teacher was employed. Thereafter the Pastor could devote more of his time to the development of the congregation. One of the results of that effort was that on November 3, 1859, definite plans were made for the erection of a church. Solicitors went to work gathering the necessary building funds. The Pastor sent a circular letter to more than 400 pastors throughout the northern and eastern states. The Synod approved the application for a loan from the Church Building Fund of the General Synod. On November 29, 1859, two lots were bought for \$300.00. On February 21, 1860, the contract was awarded and on March 5 the cornerstone was laid.

"It was an impressive service in more ways than one. On the preceding Sunday Pastor Zizelmann had preached his farewell sermon and installed his successor. He now bade farewell to the flock he had shepherded for nearly four years and moved to Pennsylvania."

Nowhere do we find any particular reasons for his departure. In his annual report the President of the Synod reported at Round Top in 1860, "On March 16 I received word from Brother Zizelmann that he was leaving his congregation and the State". In another connection he stated, "I received from him no other information than that he was leaving Texas and was traveling north".

From other sources we know that their travels brought the family finally to Scranton, Pennsylvania. From there we have secured this information.

"In 1860 the Ministerium of Pennsylvania placed him in charge of a field which at first included mission points from Carbondale to Pittston, Pennsylvania. On August 19, 1860, Pastor Zizelmann organized Zion Church in Scranton with thirteen charter members. As the work expanded, new congregations were organized. One of these was St. Peter Church also in Scranton. This congregation was organized in 1868 and was supplied by Pastor Zizelmann until 1870, and was cared for by him again from 1877 to 1883. He resigned from the pastorate of Zion Church in 1901.

"Pastor Zizelmann died on September 7, 1902, at the age of seventy-eight years. His mortal remains were laid to rest on September 9 in Forest Hill cemetery, Dunmore, Pennsylvania."

From the records of St. Chrischona, Basel, Switzerland, we have the information that Pastor Zizelmann and a son paid a visit to his Alma Mater on September 15, 1865.

WILHELM THEODORE STROBEL

Pastor Strobel was born on October 14, 1823, in Muensingen, Wuerttemberg, Germany. Of his early life no records have been preserved. On June 10, 1848, he began his training at the Pilgrims' Mission Institute at St. Chrischona, Basel, Switzerland, and completed his course on December 24, 1849.

Thereafter he participated in one or the other phase of the Pilgrims' Mission programs in the homeland. By a strange coincidence, by the harmonizing of information gathered from widely separated sources, we know that in 1850 he served at the Mission's literature distributing station, Pfingstweide, on Lake Constance near Friedrichshafen. His position seems to have been that of manager and housekeeper for two mission-brothers who did the actual work of placing Christian literature in the homes of neighboring communities. Soon after this work was undertaken, one of those missionaries died and Strobel was stricken with typhoid fever. It was this situation that prompted Mr. C. Spittler at Basel to instruct Pastors T. Kleis and C. A. Sager to postpone their imminent departure for Texas and rush instead to Pfingstweide to man the station for the time being.

After he recovered from his siege of illness he continued his missionary activities. On June 29, 1851, he was ordained with five of his Chrischona brothers to the Lutheran ministry. On September 2 they boarded the *Franziska* at Bremen and landed at Galveston on November 5.

He was present at Houston and was one of the organizers of the First Evangelical Lutheran Synod in Texas. He was one of the four who made that memorable stage coach trip from Houston to La Grange, and one of the three who made that gruelling six day tramp in the wet and wintry weather to New Braunfels. Under the circumstances we dare make the deduction that he was the one of the trio who became ill on the last lap of that journey and had to be supported by his weary and foot-sore fellow travelers.

When Pastor Kleis made assignments of fields of service to the three men who had come to him, it was decided that Pastor Strobel should go to Victoria. There he would be near his old friend Pastor C. A. Sager; according to correspondence in hand, it would seem that the families of the two men were old acquaintances and friends. Pastor Kleis accompanied Pastor Strobel to Victoria to introduce him to the place and people. How easy it is to imagine that they dropped in on Pastor Sager in Meyersville on their way south, to relieve their many associations of the past and to share with the new man their common experiences in the Texas mission fields.

The records of Trinity Lutheran Church in Victoria tell this story of Pastor Strobel's ministry in that place.

"Mission activities in Victoria were begun as early as 1851 by Rev. W. Strobel, a graduate of St. Chrischona, Switzerland, and one

of the organizers of the Synod. He gathered the Lutherans, chiefly emigrants from various parts of Germany. A meeting was held on December 14, 1851. The purpose seems to have been to pave the way for the founding of a congregation and assuring support for the Pastor. Subscriptions were gathered and twenty-eight names appear in the records of the meeting. The total subscribed was \$117.50. An agreement for one year was made. The services expected of the Pastor were: he shall conduct two services each Lord's day and on special church festivals; he shall organize and teach a parochial school for the children; in this school he shall offer the subjects of an elementary education and also the truths of our salvation; the school shall be conducted for three hours on five days of the week. Provision was made for compensation from each child who would attend the school.

"On December 5, 1852, another meeting was held. At this meeting the organization of a congregation was completed under the name: the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Victoria. There were thirty-seven charter members. Mr. Strobel was elected to serve as pastor for one year, and a Church Council was elected as well.

"A lot was purchased for the sum of \$20.00 and paid for in three installments. The building of a church was begun and completed in 1853. A mission society was organized and a preaching place begun at Spring Creek."

We take a full measure of the man when we note some of the paragraphs from the Constitution he had his congregation adopt.

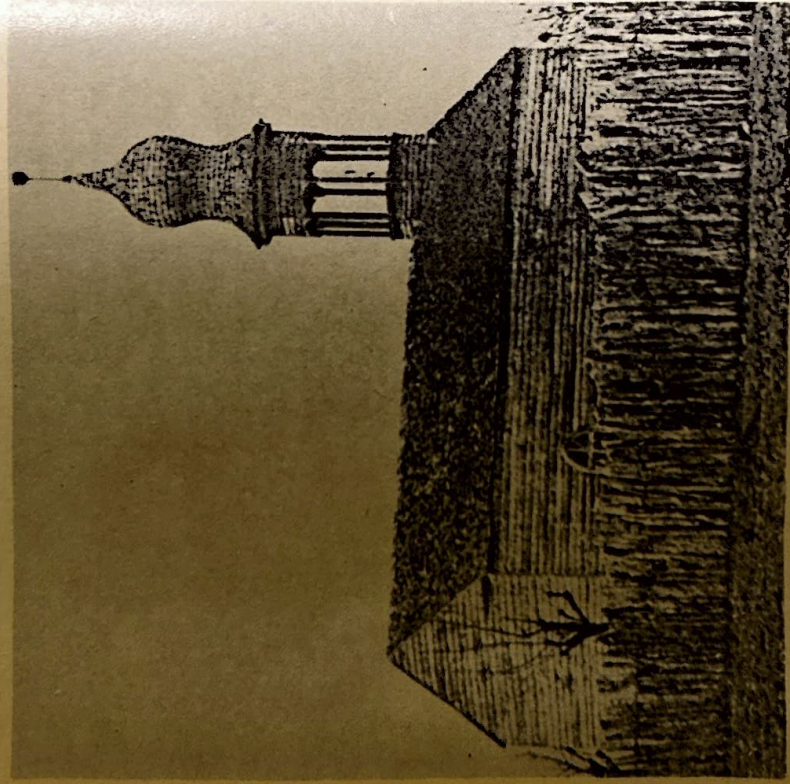
"Duties of the pastor: he shall be a member of the First Evangelical Lutheran Synod in Texas; he shall pray much for his own salvation and in that interest study the Word of God; he shall conduct the worship services and administer the Sacraments, using the prescribed liturgical forms; he shall visit the members of the congregation and especially the sick, the widows and orphans; he shall give punctual attention to those who live without God and Christ, and seek to direct them to Christ; he shall conduct periods of religious instruction which shall be attended not only by children but by adults as well; he shall encourage and admonish his people to pray and to accept the truths of salvation.

"Duties of the congregation: the members shall see to it that the Word of God is taught in its truth and purity and the Sacraments administered according to the Word of God and the liturgy of the Church; they shall labor for the purity of the faith of all members, and the performance of their duties; they shall carefully provide for the Christian instruction of the children belonging to the congregation; they shall provide for the regular support of the pastor; they shall provide for the maintenance and continuation of the office of the ministry; they shall make provision for the needy and the poor; they shall participate in sending the Gospel to the ends of the earth by supporting missions to the extent of their ability."

In 1852 Pastor Strobel and his congregation were hosts to the Sec-

ond Convention of the Synod. By a comparison of the respective dates we note that this was even prior to the actual organization of the congregation.

Sometime in the latter part of 1854 the Pastor severed his connections with the Victoria congregation and assumed a new mission, Comaltown. This was a growing settlement between the Comal and Guadalupe rivers and immediately east of New Braunfels. Even in those days the two places



THE EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
Comaltown, Texas

were sometimes identified as one community. It must have been a flourishing mission that blossomed quickly. The Minutes of the Synod of the following year credit Pastor Strobel with a church building, a parochial school, and 136 members; and that was the largest number of members in the record that year. The church was located directly across the street intersection from the northeast corner of the Public Plaza. The cupola was surely a distinguishing mark of the little house of worship. The Pastor's spirit of hospitality again demonstrated itself when he and his people served as hosts to the meeting of the Synod in 1856.

But as rapid as the rise of the mission seems to have been so sudden was also its decline. The introductory paragraph to the Minutes of the 1857 convention states that Pastor Strobel had left his charge and had gone to New Castle, Pennsylvania. The President's report adds this information: "Contrary to every expectation the congregation in Comaltown was dissolved. In view of this fact Brother Strobel had to look about for a new field of service. Since he could not find one in Texas, and also because his health had suffered much, he decided to return to Germany or go to a northern state. The latter possibility developed." We pause to note that the dissolution of the congregation can not mean that it went out of existence at that time. As we follow the story of the Synod's work we read of other pastors who served there at various times.

During his short stay in the State, Pastor Strobel took an active and leading part in the Synod's affairs. We have already referred to his active participation in the organization meeting in Houston, and his services as host pastor to the conventions of 1852 and 1856. At the Third Convention, at Galveston in 1853, he was elected to serve as secretary when Pastor Braun resigned from that office and from membership in the Synod. At the Fourth Convention, at Castroville in 1854, he was named to serve on the committee which was to develop some definite plans for "an institution which might offer classical and theological courses". At the same time he was appointed to be one of two assistants to the editor of the Synod's to-be-created church paper. At the Fifth Convention, at Fredericksburg in 1855, we may say that he served as an executive secretary for two days, till it was established that the President would not be able to attend and a temporary president was elected. And at the Sixth Convention, in his own congregation at Comaltown in 1856, he was honored with the office of the president of the Synod. He did not serve long however. As we have heard, during the course of the year he followed a call north.

From the historical records of St. Paul Lutheran Church, New Castle, Pennsylvania, we learn that "the Rev. Wm. Strobel was elected pastor on February 15, 1857, and served the newly-formed and self-supporting parish until March 4, 1859. He conducted services on alternate Sundays at 10:30 a. m. and 3:00 p. m." From our story of the ministry of Pastor Caspar Braun we recall that it was he who had organized this congregation in 1848, that he served it from his home in Beaver. In the meantime New Castle had become the center of a new parish. According to the MEMORIAL HISTORY OF THE PITTSBURG SYNOD, Zion Church in Wayne Township, and Jerusalem Church in Princeton were the affiliated congregations.

Beyond this we have been able to find only two bits of information touching on his later activities and life. From the above mentioned MEMORIAL HISTORY we take the notation: "Removed to Hartwick Synod in 1859". The Texas Synod appendix to the HISTORY OF THE IOWA SYNOD, written in 1894 or 1895, states "Pastor Strobel is living in retirement in the north".

CHRISTIAN OEFINGER

Pastor Christian Oefinger was born at Aldingen, Wuerttemberg, Germany, on January 4, 1825. Under what circumstances he spent his childhood and youth-years we do not know. Under what circumstances he was led to dedicate his life to the service of his Lord we can not tell. But on January 6, 1849, two days after his 24th birthday, he enrolled at the Pilgrims' Mission school, St. Chrischona, near Basel, Switzerland. He remained in this connection till July 1, 1851. On this same date his classmates John Ebinger and Johannes Roehm were "mustered out". Were they perhaps sent out as a team on some assignment in the interest of gathering experience prior to their departure for Texas?

With five classmates he was ordained to the Lutheran ministry on June 29, 1851, at Loerrach. Following more "training in service", they sailed from Bremen on September 2, aboard the *Franziska* and arrived at Galveston on November 5.

Having arrived on Wednesday, he and his associates, with the exception of Pastor Heinrich Wendt who remained to serve in Galveston, arrived in Houston on Saturday evening. On Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday he participated in the organization of the First Evangelical Lutheran Synod in Texas. He was one of the four who left Houston long before daybreak on Thursday on that rugged stage coach trip to La Grange. He was one of three who made that daring trip afoot from La Grange to Pastor Kleis in Neighborsville, near New Braunfels.

In the company of Pastor Kleis he went to Castroville and Quilhi. Pastor Kleis had extended his missionary visits to those settlements on the Medina river. A confirmation class of seven members at Castroville on February 16, 1851, one of eleven members at Quilhi on February 26, 1851, must have been his work. Now that they could have it so, they were to have a pastor of their own in the person of Christian Oefinger.

The seeming impossibility of laying hands on the congregational records of those early days makes it difficult to tell as complete a story of Pastor Oefinger as we would like, or, as a few evidences of his ministry indicate, we would be justified in doing. We have reason to believe that here, as elsewhere, minutes and similar records were kept in the same families so long that finally they came to be looked upon as family property, to be tucked away so carefully that those of another generation can not find them, or to have been disposed of by them as "just some old books".

Another writer sings a similar dirge of such losses:

"While the Lutheran Church in Castroville came a little later (than the Roman Catholic) and has always been less powerful numerically, it counted among its members some of the earliest and most stalwart of the Castro colonists. If the history of the Lutheran Church in Castroville is less colorful than that of the Catholics, that is due, in part at least, to the fact that we have no bio-

ographies giving concrete details of the lives of the early pastors. Those men were probably uncomfortable, self-sacrificing, and brave. But no one tells us about them."

From such sources as we do have we learn that there were Lutheran families among those who survived that badly managed colonization effort of Henri de Castro, and who were finally settled on this beauty spot on this loop of the Medina river. The wide-spread report of sad experiences cut down the growth of the colony for several years. However, during the first years following 1850 a new interest and attention was fixed on this area. Not a few of those were from that section of Germany from which Pastor Oefinger had come. Among them were his fiancee and his brother Andreas, and seemingly other relatives and friends.

If we look for a human interest touch in Pastor Oefinger we find it in the Good Samaritan service he rendered his Brother Zizelmann. The latter had fallen seriously ill in San Antonio with typhoid fever. The "crazy doctor" had informed Pastor Oefinger of the San Antonio Pastor's condition. In the company of one of his Quilhi members, Mr. Sandleben, he drove to the city. It was an hour past midnight when they arrived. "The doctor notified me that you were perishing in poverty and hunger, that at any cost you must get out into the country where you might find something to eat and to drink and get some fresh air. We have come to take you with us immediately. The doctor said that you could not stand traveling in the heat of day." The date was August 13, 1852. After a stay of three weeks, the patient could say, "I felt like I had been born anew".

On January 23, 1852, a preliminary meeting was held and a week later, on January 29, Zion Lutheran Church was organized by Pastor Oefinger with twelve charter members. Services were conducted in the log cabins of the settlers. These cramped accommodations made them think in terms of church building. Complications in securing title to the selected building site, and the scarcity of funds slowed the building project. A loan of \$400.00 from the Church Building Fund of the General Synod was secured. The building was finally completed and "dedicated to the glory of God" in 1854. The Pastor's living quarters were located in the balcony.

It seems that the Pastor bought a parcel of ground from the congregation and "from the material left over from the construction of the church he built his own small parsonage." This property he in turn sold back to the congregation when he severed his connections.

At the same time that his congregation at Castroville was building the church, a similar work was under way in Pastor Oefinger's other congregation, at Quilhi, about ten miles westward.

From April 28 to May 2, 1854, the First Evangelical Lutheran Synod in Texas met for a stirring convention in Castroville. President Wendt's annual report contains the statement, "The Conference of the Western District met during the course of the year at Castroville. At that time the Bethlehem church at Quilhi was dedicated to the service of God." In a later

oral report on church affairs we read in the minutes of the convention, "Especially the congregations of Brother Oefinger in Castroville and Quilhi demonstrated great zeal. Each of them erected a stone church during the course of the past year, in which worship services can now be conducted." And finally this note of the Secretary, "On Sunday, during these convention days, a service with the celebration of Holy Communion was conducted at Castroville and three services were conducted at Quilhi."

In 1861 the Eleventh Convention of the Synod was held at Quilhi. The President's annual report states, "On November 10, 1860, I received word from Brother Oefinger that he plans to relinquish his ministry in Castroville during the coming spring. He said he would return to Germany and then accept a congregation in one of the northern states." A bit later the report brings the information, "About the middle of February, 1861, Brother Oefinger notified me of his departure for Germany, and requested an honorable release from membership in the Synod. This request was granted." The records at St. Chrischona show that during his sojourn in Europe he paid a visit to his Alma Mater.

Once more Pastor Oefinger's name appears in the official Minutes of the Synod. At the Seventeenth Convention, in San Antonio, in 1869, the President's annual report contains this notice, "The Lord has called Brother Oefinger, a former member of our Synod, home from his labors in Pennsylvania." A special service, held in honor of three deceased pastors, honored his memory.

JOHANNES CONRAD ROEHM

In giving to this biography this particular place in the sequence, we have "kept the good wine until now." Pastor Roehm is the only one of the organizers of the First Evangelical Lutheran Synod in Texas who stayed with the ship to the end of life. The Minutes of the Convention of the Synod at Zionsville near Brenham, in 1876, for the first time refer to him as "our Senior", a title of respect and reverence bestowed upon him by his associates. Today we would perhaps say, "the grand old man of the Church." In view of these facts more information on his life and activity is available than is the case with any of the others whom we have here given a place in our roll call of honor. In fact much more material is available than we can use here. May the following serve the intended purpose.

Pastor Roehm, the oldest son of his parents, was born on April 2, 1822, in Metzingen, Wuerttemberg, Germany. It was a positive Christian home in which he and the other children of the family were reared. Early in life he felt that inner urge, the call to serve in the Kingdom of his Lord. His education in the home, school, and church were in keeping with family convictions and personal ambition.

At the age of twenty-one years, he accepted an appointment as a supervisor in an orphans' home in Kornthal. He served in this capacity for three and a half years. During this time his desire to become a preacher of the Word crystallized. He applied for admission to the Pilgrims' Mis-

sion institute of St. Chrischona at Basel, Switzerland, and was accepted. He was enrolled on February 16, 1848, and remained in training till July 1, 1851. On June 29, he and five classmates were ordained to the Lutheran ministry at Loerrach, Baden, Germany. On September 2, they boarded the *Franziska* at Bremen. Two days later the ship set out to sea. On November 5, they landed at Galveston.

On November 10, 11, and 12, he was an active participant in the organization of the First Evangelical Lutheran Synod in Texas, at Houston. He was one of the four who made the Texas stage coach trip to La Grange. He was one of the three who made that daring foot journey from there to Pastor Kleis at Neighborsville, near New Braunfels. He served that congregation while Pastor Kleis went to establish Pastor Strobel in Victoria and Pastor Oefinger in Castroville. Returning from there, evidently having contacted previously established connections in San Antonio, Pastor Kleis informed Pastor Roehm that he should go there to carry on the work. Pastor Roehm could not see himself as a missionary in the city. The deliberation resulted in Pastor Roehm's return to La Grange and his assumption of the work begun there by Pastor Zizelmann, while the latter went to take on the work in San Antonio. Of the personal sacrifices he made in those arrangements, of the heart-breaking experiences he had during the next ten months as he tried to win and serve the settlers in La Grange and nearby communities, we report in the next chapter of this story that relates some of the experiences of these pioneers of the faith.

In the above-mentioned connection we also learned that in the fall of 1852 he accepted the invitation of his class-mate, Pastor Wendt in Galveston, and became his associate in the school and church. During the summer of the following year, 1853, he found a field for missionary service on the Llano river, serving Leiningen, Castell, Schoenburg and Mason. His surroundings were the hill country, his experiences seem likewise to have been of an elevated and elevating nature. He continued his services there till the spring of 1855.

In making the transition from the river and hill country to his new charge, he went to Comaltown and there, on April 15, was united in marriage with Miss Louise Bandle. Even so he was among those in attendance at the convention of the Synod at Fredericksburg from April 19 to 23. In May he brought his bride to the new charge, to Frelsburg in Colorado county. There they lived and served for twenty-two years.

It was a difficult work. Bitter enemies of the word and work of God opposed him. He met them with the eternal Word, with the truth spoken in love, with a firm endurance. And God and His co-worker won out. A congregation was organized and a constitution of a positive Lutheran position was adopted. A church was built in 1860. Four and five days each week he spent teaching school, instructing for confirmation, and winning souls. He was a foot soldier; many, and of considerable distance, were the marches he made in obedience to the divine command, "Go ye!"

It was a far reaching work that unfolded in the course of the years.

He revisited Ross Prairie, where a few years before his heart was all but broken and he came within inches of losing his life. Now they welcomed him and drove eight to twelve miles from every direction when he conducted services. Before too long, in 1859 a church was built, then a parsonage, and a pastor called to serve the community. New Bremen, Paged Settlement, Rockhouse, Hallettsville, Content, Weimar, Schulenburg, High Hill, East Navidad, Black Jack Springs, La Grange, Bluff all received his attention, all knew him as their missionary pastor. A baptism provided the occasion for the beginning of missionary work at New Ulm. Then there was San Bernardo. During the Civil War settlers at Cat Springs begged for his services, and he served them till 1877. For five years he served Columbus, till it became self-supporting. Nearby Alleyton was served till 1867 when yellow fever almost exterminated the population.

On March 8, 1877, he went to Galveston for the third time. The first time was when he disembarked there from Europe. The second time was when he went to assist Pastor Wendt. This time he went in answer to the call that made him pastor of the congregation.

The congregation had been in existence for about twenty-seven years. Several able pastors had served there. Even so it was not an easy assignment. But faithful work was crowned with blessing during the twenty-five years he was there. "Much sorrow but also much grace have I experienced, but neither of these did I experience in their smallest measure in Galveston." Thus he expressed it. We list only some of the outstanding items on each list. In 1892 his younger son, Johannes, was called to assist the aging father as the associate pastor. In 1893 he accompanied his wife to her grave. In 1895 the West End Mission had developed sufficiently so that it could be separated from the mothering congregation. In 1897 the son had to leave Galveston for a higher altitude for health reasons, in 1900 he died at the age of thirty-one. On June 29, 1901, "The Senior" observed the Golden Anniversary of his ordination, on November 10 the Golden Anniversary of the organization of the Synod, and on November 17 the Golden Anniversary of the organization of his congregation in Galveston.

His hope and prayer had been "to be able to work in the Lord's vineyard down to the last day of my life". On May 25, 1902, he conducted his last service. That evening he was stricken. On June 2, a peaceful end was granted him at the age of eighty years. A touching tribute was paid him by many, among them the children of his Sunday school. From the entrance of the cemetery to the grave they stood on either side of the passage thru which the casket was carried. Each of them carried a small bouquet of flowers. When the grave had been closed they marched past and lovingly deposited the flowers there.

During the time of his ministry Pastor Roehm baptized 4,804, confirmed 1,648, officiated at 1,580 marriages, conducted 1,939 funeral services and served 29,423 with the Sacrament of Holy Communion.

And even that is not the whole story. "Pastor Roehm was well known in all Lutheran congregations in Texas." His was an unrivaled record in another respect. We refer to his services as an officer of the Synod. At the

organization meeting, in Houston in 1850, he was elected treasurer. At Comaltown, in 1856, he was again elected treasurer. When the Synod met in Frelsburg in 1857 he was not only the host pastor. During the course of the previous year President Strobel had resigned to go to Pennsylvania and had turned the office over to the secretary. Then President-Secretary Wendt resigned to go to Europe and turned both offices over to the treasurer, Pastor Roehm. That convention continued him in the office of treasurer. The 1858 convention, at Salem near Brenham, elected him president; it repeated at Meyersville in 1859, and again at Round Top in 1860. Three terms in an office was all the Constitution permitted. The next convention, at Quilhi in 1861, elected him treasurer, repeated in Ross Prairie in 1862 and again in Victoria in 1865. No conventions were held during the Civil War years 1863 and 1864. At Serbin he was elected president in 1866, again in Meyersville in 1867, and again in Salem near Brenham in 1868. This convention also elected him to represent the Synod at the meeting of the General Council of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America in which application was made for membership. The San Antonio convention, in 1869, returned him to the office of treasurer, and he held the office for four successive years through 1872. In 1875 the convention in Quilhi called him back to office once more. This was the year that would bring with it the Silver Anniversary of the organization of the Synod. Pastor Roehm was honored by being returned once more to the office of president.

We close this biography by quoting the Scripture that closed his obituary as it was printed in the church paper. "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth. 'Yea', saith the Spirit, 'that they may rest from their labours, and their works do follow them'."—Revelation 14:13.

OTHER PASTORS OF THIS PERIOD

While we have thus tried to honor the memory of the eight pioneer pastors of the First Evangelical Lutheran Synod in Texas, we feel deeply constrained to give at least honorable mention to those who came to join them. They too contributed to the planting of the Lutheran Church in Texas in those early days. Some gave so very much, others less according to their talents, and still others threw in only their own liabilities. This brief roll call includes only those who come within the scope of this part of our story, during the first 25 years. We shall list them in the chronological order of their appearance in the records of the Synod, together with the stations of their services. The time of service, for those who held offices, is traced to the time of the Golden Anniversary.

J. M. Kugel: Indianola; Bastrop; Fort Madison, Iowa.

H. Bohnenberger: Comaltown and Schumannsville; Bastrop; Fredericksburg; first full-time missionary at large; Galveston; president of the Synod in 1862 and on into the two years when no conventions were held; died in office on September 5, 1864.

D. Ankele: Spring Creek and Spring Branch near Houston; Canelton, Indiana.

F. Hamm: colporteur of a tract society, was licensed for one year to preach and administer the Sacraments in isolated localities.

A. K. Kitterer: settlements on the Llano river; Quilhi and New Fountain; Bastrop; Victoria; then went north; served as secretary in 1865.

G. Woerner: Spring Creek, also known as Rose Hill, and Spring Branch near Houston.

J. Haerdtle: Yorktown; Spring Branch; to Pennsylvania.

M. Fotsch: Bellville and Buckhornpoint; then north.

E. C. Mueller: Meyersville; first member of the Synod to die; buried in Meyersville.

J. G. Lieb: Galveston; Round Top; Serbin; Austin; Salem near Brenham; served as secretary 1861-1863, 1868-1870; on the resignation of Ebinger and on death of Bohnenberger took over the presidency; served as president 1865, 1871, 1876-1878.

J. Zwolanek: San Felipe in Austin County; served as secretary in 1858-1859.

C. Beck: Independence; then north.

J. G. Kiesel: Wilton, Iowa.

C. G. Moedinger: New Orleans; to the Lutheran Missouri Synod.

J. Schaege: Meyersville; died there.

J. Schumacher: Cherry Hill or Cherry Spring; Fredericksburg; Ulm Creek; Lancaster, Missouri.

F. Ehinger: Galveston.

J. Moegle: Houston; Smithson Valley and Schumansville; Comaltown; San Antonio; Welcome or Wesley; Shelby or Roedersmuehle.

S. Fehr: Meyersville.

Mayer: Mobile, Alabama.

C. Meyer: San Antonio, Columbus.

F. Gloor: Galveston, died there.

J. J. Dietrich: Galveston; Comaltown; Bastrop; White Oak near Houston; to Middleport, Pennsylvania.

J. A. Kypfer: Neighborsville-Hortontown.

G. Schall: Quilhi; Victoria, died there.

M. Hailfinger: Spring Branch near Houston, died after very brief service, buried there.

F. Flath: Spring Branch; Indianola; then north.

C. Geiger: Salem near Brenham; High Hill; missionary at large; Oakland in Colorado County and Strunkville in Lavaca County; served as secretary 1866, 1872-1874, 1889; as president in 1888, 1890.

W. Krapf: Independence; Spring Branch; Victoria; San Antonio.

J. Graul: Berlin near Brenham; Round Top.

C. Fischer: Castroville; Ulm Creek; back to Germany died there.

R. Jaeggli: Fayetteville; Ross Prairie; Warrenton or Neese's Store; Ross Prairie again; Zionsville; served as treasurer 1868, 1875-1878, 1896-1901; as secretary 1867, 1871; as president 1869-1870, 1872-1874, 1879-1881, 1885.

A. Neuthardt: Round Top.

C. C. Rudi: Galveston; Buckhornpoint; Serbin; East Navidad or Black Jack Spring; Prairie Hill; Cibolo.

F. Holzinger: Indianola; missionary at large; Yorktown; Fredericksburg; Meyersville, died there; served as treasurer 1866, 1867.

F. Wohlschlegel: Quilhi; Seguin; Ross Prairie; to the Methodist Church.

H. Merz: Castroville; Fredericksburg; first president of first Lutheran College in Texas, at Rutersville; Welcome; missionary at large; Austin; served as treasurer 1873-1874; as president 1882-1884, 1886.

L. Zahn: Galveston, very brief presence.

U. Berner: Victoria; Chicago, Illinois.

J. Kaspar: Black Jack; High Hill in Fayette County.

H. Pfenniger: Meyersville; Berlin near Brenham; Rutersville; Spring Branch; Arneckeville or Five-Mile Coletto; Brenham; served as treasurer 1879-1880.

F. Ernst: Pflugerville; Rehberg, or Union Hill, or Burton; New Weh-dem near Brenham; East Navidad; McDade; Bushdale; Lyons; served as secretary 1879.

F. Frehner: Arneckeville and nearby places; missionary at large, lived at New Braunfels, then at Seguin; Black Jack; Quilhi; Ross Prairie; Weimar; McDade; served as treasurer 1881-1884.

C. Koelle: New Orleans; to the Presbyterian Church.

J. Grossweiler: Fredericksburg; San Antonio.

C. Koch: New Weh-dem near Brenham; second congregation at Fredericksburg.

G. Ermel: Quihi and New Fountain; Spring Branch.
 G. Gruber: White Oak near Houston, very short time; went north.
 M. Oehler: Meyersville; Pflugerville.

A. H. Lettermann: Castroville; Yorktown; Berlin near Brenham;
 Cibolo; Pflugerville; McDade; Pittsburg in Kansas; Gay Hill, near Brenham; served as treasurer 1889-1894.

W. Pfennig: Zionsville; Pflugerville; Mason; Castroville; Richland;
 New Wehden; Pflugerville again.

A. Jaeger: Columbus.

W. Graef: New Wehden.

E. Huber: Mason; Rehberg or Union Hill or Burton; Welcome; Zionsville; served as secretary 1875-1877, 1880-1882; as president 1887, 1889.

G. Jordan: Castroville; Zionsville.

C. R. Weiss: Fredericksburg; Victoria.

H. H. Boening: Spring Branch, licensed for just one year.

F. Jesse: Labadie Prairie or Zionsville; Pflugerville; Black Jack or Luck's Store; Berlin; New Wehden; Salem; served as secretary 1878, 1883.

A. Genz: White Oak, licensed for one year.

E. Zapf: Rabbscreek or Serbin; died within first year; congregation to Missouri Synod.

F. Gerstmann: Quihi; Frelsburg.

G. Thoene: Zionsville; Mason; Greenvine; Caldwell.

J. Doerfler: Arneckeville; Ross Prairie; Temple; Bartlett; Granger.

G. Stricker: Mason; Meyersville; Zionsville; served as secretary 1886-1888; as president 1891-1893.

A. Falkenberg: Columbus or Mueller's Creek or Haag Settlement; Quihi; Yorktown; Rehberg; served as treasurer 1885-1888, as secretary 1891-1893; as president 1894-1901.

According to its Constitution, the Synod recognized ordained men, licensed men, and catechists or teachers in the parochial schools as eligible to the roster of the clergy. Very few of the above named men came to Texas as ordained men. Most of them served for several years under the annual license system, then, having proved themselves, were admitted to ordination. Some began as catechists, then were licensed, and finally ordained. Several of them remained catechists. Others there were who did not prove themselves worthy of the confidence placed in their ability and sincerity. The license of such was withdrawn.

CHAPTER III

THE PLANTING: THE FIRST EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN SYNOD IN TEXAS

Having made a survey of the field, having been introduced to the planters, let us now see their planting.

THE SYNOD'S CONSTITUTION

Of first interest and importance is the Synod itself, this formal church organization, created by the convention in Houston. A brief study of the Constitution adopted there shows what a sturdy Kingdom sapping they set into the soil of Texas.

The introductory paragraph sets forth this sound, historical profession of faith:

"We, the Pastors and Theological Candidates of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in the state of Texas, acknowledge Jesus Christ as the one and only Head of the Church, and the writings of the Old and New Testaments as the only infallible rule of our faith and life. As our bond of union we take the unaltered symbolical writings as found in the Formula of Concord; we obligate ourselves to accept them as the correct interpretation of the Word of God, and to teach and preach in harmony therewith. Trusting the Almighty to stand by us and the Holy Spirit to lead us, we do this day, November 10, 1851, in this convention assembled in Houston, Harris County, Texas, enact and ratify the following Constitution for the administration of our Synod."

The First Article stipulated: "The name of this organization shall be 'The First Evangelical Lutheran Synod in Texas'."—We digress a bit to make this observation and comment: in later years the word "German" was inserted into the official title. The first time this was done insofar as the official records give evidence, was in President J. C. Roehm's "Annual report for the First German Evangelical Lutheran Synod of Texas from March 1856 to April 1857." But, to appropriate the words of Jesus, "In the beginning it was not so." The official minutes of the organization meeting went so far as to say: "The resolution was unanimously adopted that the name of the Synod, in all time to come, shall be: First Evangelical Lutheran Synod in Texas." In 1858 the Synod provided for the printing of the Constitution. That printed edition carried the word "German" in the title. And thereafter it seems to have been "official".

The same article provided: "The first purpose of this organization shall be to establish and develop congregations within our given boundaries, and to prepare pious and able Pastors who shall lead them toward

perfection in holiness. The other purpose, of equal importance, shall be to plan a system and develop a series of missions that, with the help of God and the application of all our resources, will enable us to comply with the most holy command of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ when He said: "Go ye into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature."

Other provisions of this article were: 1. Ministerial delegates of sister synods, or of another denomination, present at a meeting of Synod may be seated as advisory members; 2. The Synod shall be composed of pastors, candidates of theology, parochial teachers, and representatives of the congregations that are now, or in the future will be, affiliated with our organization; 3. The Synod shall see to it that its regulations concerning church order and discipline be observed by member congregations and pastors.

Article II provided for a president, a secretary, and a treasurer elected annually by a majority of clerical and lay delegates present at the meeting of the Synod. Pastors only might serve as president or secretary, with service limited to three consecutive years. A layman might serve as treasurer and without tenure limitation.

Article III set forth the privileges and responsibilities of the President; Article IV those of the Secretary; Article V those of the Treasurer; Article VI those of the pastors, congregations and delegates; Article VII those of the assembled convention. Most of these are the parliamentary rules governing a democratically organized church body, many of which are still in effect in spite of several re-organizations.

Article VIII stated: "Since the dignity and progress of the Gospel is so closely associated with the conduct of the Pastor, the Synod shall watch over its members with the greatest care and impartiality." It continued with: "Every Christian should be careful not to begin or to pass on evil gossip about any person, and especially not about a teacher of the Gospel." For an infraction of such Christian ethics, an appeal was made for the Biblical procedure in dealing with the case. For the more serious possibilities—"drunkenness, wantonness, teaching of fundamental error in doctrine, or crime"—definite procedure for report, suspension, investigation, trial and appropriate dealing was stipulated.

Article IX provided for the subdivision of the Synod into three or more Conferences, each composed of three to ten pastors. If travel distances permitted, two annual two-day sessions were to be held "and their main interest, in addition to those regular church interests that may be submitted, shall be practical studies of the Gospel bearing on the conversion of sinners and the edification of the believers."

Article X created, in addition to the sessions of the Synod, a session of the Ministerium. This body was composed exclusively of ordained pastors. Its purpose was "to fulfill those duties which Christ and His Apostles laid only upon such, namely: examine, license, and ordain the candidates for the office of a pastor. This body we call the Ministerium, or the Assembly of the Elders, under which term the Holy Scriptures speak

exclusively of the ordained pastors." It continued: "Every accusation of error in doctrine made against a pastor, every appeal from the decision of a Church Council which has found a fellow church member guilty of false doctrine, or an appeal of a pastor against the decision of a conference in matters of a charge made against him, shall be submitted to this body for examination and a final decision." And "In the event an ordained pastor of another denomination applies for membership in the Synod, the Ministerium shall be that body which shall decide the issue."

Article XI specified that "the examination of a candidate for ordination to the ministry shall be conducted by an appointed committee of ordained pastors. Since such an examination, openly conducted, should be of interest and value to the Ministerium, and since it should be more faithfully conducted under such circumstances, it is strongly recommended that the examination be conducted in the presence of the entire body of ordained pastors. After the committee has completed its examination, any pastor may address further questions to the candidate. The examination shall cover the following subjects: personal piety, motives of the applicant in seeking the sacred office, the original languages of Holy Scripture, the evidences of the Christian religion, natural and revealed theology, church history Christian sociology, American civil government, and church management. But not even a license shall be granted a candidate who is below 21 years of age, or who can not speak and write correctly the language in which he is to serve. And only in the most exceptional cases may a license be granted an applicant if the committee finds that he is not sufficiently familiar with the above named subjects, with the exception of the Hebrew and Greek languages. But also the licensed candidate must recognize and accept the symbolical books of our Evangelical Lutheran Church as the correct interpretation of the Word of God and must promise to teach in harmony therewith."

The next article supplemented this one by providing for the ordination of the successful candidate and for the installation of a pastor in his charge.

Article XIII concluded the Constitution by making provisions for later adoption of By-laws or other additions "provided they are not in conflict with the specifications of this Constitution."

Through this act of organization the Texas Synod became the twenty-fifth member in the family of such Lutheran church bodies existing in the United States. But much more significant is the fact that, by its introductory confessional paragraph, the Texas Synod placed itself on so all-out and clear-cut a Lutheran basis as had been done by only one other of those twenty-five bodies.

PERSONAL EXPERIENCES

Another phase of what we mean by "planting the church" can well be demonstrated as we follow several of those first "planters" and witness some of their experiences.

Wendt In Galveston

In the previous chapter we learned that when the six pastors arrived from Europe on November 5, 1851, they were received by members of the seven-family congregation in Galveston and that Henry Wendt remained in Galveston at their request. On Sunday, November 9, he conducted his first service. What his impressions were we shall hear shortly.

On Monday, his efforts at settling down were interrupted by the invitation to come to Houston to participate in the organization of the Synod. He made the trip to come to Houston to participate in the organization of the Synod. He made the trip in time to be a party to the last day's culminating effort. Brief was this unexpected reunion with his brethren, for at 4 o'clock the next morning, four of them began their trip to La Grange and New Braunfels. All the more can we imagine that Pastor Wendt remained a day or so in Houston to get acquainted with his neighbors, Pastors Braun and Braschler, and to review with them the details of the first two days of that organization meeting which he had missed. But in spite of the difficulties already revealed in his first few days in Galveston and in his first service there, Pastor Wendt returned to that city. He expressed high hopes that those difficulties might be overcome and that a congregation might be organized.

What were those difficulties?

At first, services were conducted in the homes of those who associated themselves with the undertaking. But before long, perhaps because the quarters were too limited, arrangements were made to rent the Lyceum Building located at the corner of 25th Street and Avenue G. This building, erected to serve private and public cultural and social interests, was rented for Sunday worship services for five years. Then the congregation bought the building for \$500 and moved it to lots acquired at the same time at the corner of 24th Street and Avenue G. Today it still serves as the annex of the church.

On the surface, that looks like a successful work right from the start. But underlying facts tell another story.

Monthly contributions were supposed to provide the rental fee. If they were not made or proved insufficient, the balance was taken from the Sunday offering—which, it had been agreed, should be the pastor's salary. And for more than two years, Pastor Wendt's salary rested on so precarious a basis. Not until 1854, and only when the congregation was experiencing a steady growth, was he assured of a \$25 monthly salary.

Besides his duties as pastor, he served also as teacher. But it was at his own initiative, risk and expense that he had to rent the building that served him as a school. To accomplish this he had to borrow money—at 24 per cent interest. He had to acquire all school furnishings and supplies—on credit—and thus at an additional cost. But the school prospered. Within a few months he had to engage an assistant. In the following fall

the school was opened in larger quarters and a second assistant was employed—all at the pastor's expense.

In 1853 he extended an urgent invitation to his classmate, Pastor J. C. Roehm, "to come and stand by him in his ministry and school since he had so much work and was sick so frequently." Fortunately he did not have to pay his assistants any salary, except perhaps room and board. Even though he received tuition from the parents of the children in his school, the amount did not suffice to offset the investment. Finally, in 1856, after the school had become established, the congregation adopted it as its own project and Pastor Wendt's salary was increased to \$60 monthly.

"I have high hopes," Pastor Wendt wrote, "that when the difficulties are overcome we shall organize a congregation." His patient and persistent faithfulness toward that end was attended not only by the kind grace of God, but also by His severer providence, as is evidenced in these words from his report covering the early days:

"My congregation is faring well. This dreaded yellow fever and similar visitations have served the people well. The influence of the once-feared 'German Union' is broken. Many of them come to services, even belong to the congregation. Now they are quite willing to provide a site for church building purposes."

These facts, in addition to what we can read between the lines, suffice to bear out the statement, "Wendt is standing in a very difficult position." But even so, he planted the church there.

Roehm In The La Grange Area

From the previous chapter we will recall that when Pastors Oefinger, Roehm, Strobel and Zizelmann arrived in La Grange from Houston, Pastor Zizelmann remained there while the others went on to Pastor Kleis in Neighborsville near New Braunfels. We also recall that several weeks later, Pastor Roehm returned to La Grange, to persuade Pastor Zizelmann to go to San Antonio and to offer to take over the work in La Grange.

In the three weeks he had spent in that area, Pastor Zizelmann had made contacts that he quickly shared with Pastor Roehm. A Mr. Brodbeck had offered him room and board. A Mr. Rothe and Mr. Markmann had also shown interest. Concerning his first service, conducted in the courthouse on Wednesday, November 18, and of his sermon based on Romans 1:16, some folks had said: "Too dogmatic; our people want something on morals; they do not understand such matters of faith." A school had been set up, for there were many children in the ages from 6 to 17 "who had not been baptized, who knew nothing of reading, writing, or anything else." And this, too, had been made clear to him: "We want no religious instruction. We need none of that nonsense." On November 31, Pastor Zizelmann had borrowed a donkey and had visited in Biegel Settlement, Ross Prairie and Fayetteville. Of Biegel he said: "Things look pitiful. Many who were once baptized in the old country have become coarse pagans." Of Ross Prairie he said "Things look better there." Near Fayetteville he had found a Mr. Knippschehr who "had decided he would try to get a pastor from

Europe for his family. He would offer room, board, laundry and \$100 per year, with the privilege of serving other families and other settlements. Four or five other German families and also a large number of prominent Americans showed interest. The latter are more interested in school and church than the former. Most of them are quite religious, while the Germans are often an offense and are usually looked down on by the Americans."

Having given Pastor Roehm the benefit of all these contacts, Pastor Zizelmann made ready to leave for San Antonio. We shall let Pastor Roehm tell his own story:

"It was midnight when the brother's omnibus left La Grange.

The darkness of a depressing mood settled upon me. I was sad, discouraged, and dissatisfied. In the following days, when I contacted the folks in La Grange in the interest of carrying on with church and school, I was advised not to do so. I went to a settlement about five miles to the southwest, O'Quinn or Black Jack Springs. For two days I walked from house to house, inviting folks to a service on Sunday. With one exception, people listened quite willingly but the answer was an indefinite, 'We'll see.' On Sunday, one woman came, and then she, too, withdrew bashfully.

"My spirit sank to the bottom. But I was to learn that the bottom was still deeper down. But to cry from such depths gives courage and faith.

"Back in La Grange, I soon learned that I had thought too little of my own welfare when I gave Brother Zizelmann all my money. But I did have 25 cents. But the folks there let me know that they could not go on supplying room and board. I offered to pay with a new cloth coat, but my landlord refused to accept that. I offered to do some work, but they advised against that. Finally they decided they would take turns at supplying meals. But the first day it did not suit the lady of the house to have it so. Quickly I decided I would fast. This gave me the satisfaction of knowing that I would not be a burden to anyone.

"One thing was sure. Things could not go on like this. I decided to go out to the settlement at Ross Prairie, some 12 or 14 miles away. I had three family names from there. The first of these could not keep me. They simply did not have room, nor even necessities for themselves. Their spirit was willing, as they demonstrated on later occasions. When I called at the second address, I was quickly polished off with, 'Since Zizelmann did not stay, we do not care to keep you either.' But they gave me night quarters in an old, empty cotton house. The rain and wind beat through the roof and log walls. My clothes, which I piled on top of an old blanket, were soaked. A northern stopped the rain but increased the cold. By morning I was frozen stiff. At breakfast my heart was full to the breaking point! It was only with effort that I drank that cup of black coffee. It occurred to me that my descent had no bottom!

"But I set out to contact the third family on my list. My pocket was empty, my stomach was empty, and I had no friend within a

100 miles. I stood out there on the broad prairie and above me the heavens were clear. And then and there that golden passage came to mind: 'The Son of Man had not where to lay His head.' How fortunate, how rich, how satisfied I suddenly felt. I jumped for glee and joy! Never had I been so like my Savior, at least in poverty. I fell to my knees in prayer, but I found hardly any words than these! 'The Son of Man had not where to lay His head, and yet art Thou my Savior, and Thy Father is my Father too.'

"In this happy mood, I started again, lost my way, and had to walk an extra seven miles. I was brought face to face with grim realities when I had to wade through the ice cold Cummins Creek. Settlers gave me direction from farm to farm, and so I finally arrived at the home of family Knippischehr. They were just eating their noon meal. Their rice cooked in milk had such an inviting aroma, but the dear people just did not think to invite a frozen and hungry traveler in, and I just could not offer to be their guest. So when I inquired about the family I was looking for I was told, 'That is our brother, just a short mile from here.' I arrived there shortly after one o'clock and I briefly informed the serious-minded but friendly head of the house of my true and unfortunate situation. After a few moments, he said 'We bid you welcome, and so you will consider our house your home for the time being.' What help for me! The Lord reward those dear friends to all eternity! And it was high time I found help, for my frozen limbs were refusing to respond, and it was not till late that evening that I was warm again inside and out. But why did the dear Lord let me make that seven mile detour? As I put the question to my new-found friend, he said, 'Had you come directly, you would have arrived three hours sooner; I would not have been at home; had my wife told you I would not return before evening, you most likely would have gone on; and with this weather getting colder and colder, you might have perished.' And so I realized again, in the providence of God, there is always a 'Therefore!' for our 'Wherefore?'

"And with new confidence I went to work, first to visit the dear members of the Lutheran Church within a radius of 12 miles, to invite them to a worship service and to a discussion of future possibilities. At this I worked almost every day for two weeks. And the result, in view of all circumstances, was favorable. I offered to serve them with the Word and the Sacraments for the next six months, for I hoped within this time or at the conclusion of the period to find a home among them. And they, on their part promised by personal subscription to remunerate me with \$48.00. And for a while everything moved along well with the worship services, and the visits in the homes.

"Then, according to the wish of all concerned, an effort was to be made to build a home for the Pastor. It was to serve also as a place where the worship services and school might be conducted. All agreed to build a block house with an annex. Among those present were about 10 men who said that one or two logs would be about the extent of their ability—or willingness—to contribute. The one had

no wood, the other no wagon. And yet 36 to 40 logs were necessary. Finally our friend, Mr. Knippschehr, arose to say that he would furnish all needed logs for a 20 x 24 foot church and, if necessary, also those needed for a parsonage. However, he stated that since he had no wagon, he would not be able to deliver the logs to the building site.

"That raised the question: where shall we build the church? Some made the sensible suggestion that it be built in the center of the area to be served. Some three or four people who lived to the north of Frelsburg insisted on building it in that village. One of them said, 'We will not go down to the prairie!' He got as his reply, 'If you will not come down to us, we will not go up to you.' Nothing was accomplished.

"Since I found no other place to stay, since services were to be conducted in a private home on the prairie, since I had no place in which to teach school, I offered to work on the farm of my host. He was kind enough to teach me how to clear the forest, fell the trees, cut the timber, split the shingles, prepare fence rails, build fences, clear the field, plant and cultivate corn and cotton. This education served me well in later years.

"But my many travels on foot, getting wet from the morning dew, being exposed to the noonday heat, made inroads on my health. I contracted fever which lasted for weeks. The customary cure of castor oil, calomel and quinine did no good. Attendance at services dropped off. Sometimes three to six were present; sometimes I was there alone. Then I preached the sermon to myself. And that was very valuable, too.

"But circumstances convinced me more and more that I was laboring in vain. So I made my host a proposition. I would serve him full time in the field and with the cattle. He accepted my services on one condition, that if at any time I were to receive a call to serve in the ministry I would continue in that service. And lo, and behold! just at that time I received the most urgent invitation from Pastor Wendt in Galveston that I join him in his church and school work. Since he was younger than I, I was none too happy at the thought of being only an assistant. But Friend Knippschehr urged me to go. 'I fear if you farm for a year you will have no more joy to return to the ministry. It will be better if you remain in practice', he said.

"But how would I make the 140 to 150 mile trip to Galveston, since I had not one cent of money? Though I was still weak from fever, I borrowed a horse and called on the people whom I had served and who had promised me salary. After two days, I collected \$5.00. Friend Knippschehr went out, too, for a part of a day and collected \$5.00. That gave me exactly the amount the driver asked to carry me and my belongings to Houston. As I cast my last look out over the prairie, the words of Christ came to mind: 'And whosoever shall not receive you nor hear you: words, when you depart . . . But I did not shake their dust from off my feet. I thought it more appro-

priate to pray God for forgiveness and to commend myself and those people to His providence of grace. With that prayer and in that spirit I departed."

As we learned in the previous chapter, that "providence of grace" returned Pastor Roehm to the prairie only a few years later and he was able "to reap in joy what he had sown in tears."

Ebinger In Spring Creek

We have already learned that Pastor Braschler had decided to discontinue his ministry, at least for the time being, to find work that would assure him of a better income so he might repair the loss he had suffered in shipwreck. We also recall it was decided that Pastor Ebinger should continue the work that had been started at Spring Creek, thirty miles to the north of Houston. Quoting from his own letters, written in 1853 and 1855, we shall let him tell his own story.

In 1853 he wrote:

"This community is settled by Germans and Americans. For the time being, my work is with the former. But they are so scattered I have to walk or ride for an hour to go from one to the other. Where the majority live, there I live; there I conduct services. We do not have a church, only a roof. By fall, 1853, we hope to have a church. There I could conduct school, which I now do in a log cabin. All houses here are of logs.

"My house is made of logs. It is nine feet long and equally as wide. It has no windows, only a shutter. In the corner is a small table and my two trunks; a bookshelf is built against the wall. Here I read, pray, sing and study and have much cause to thank God for the grace He bestows on me in spiritual and physical needs.

"I have people before me to whom I must speak loudly and plainly about their eternal welfare and salvation. I follow the advice of the sainted Doctor Hofacker who said 'I do not seek to reach the heart by way of an appeal to the head. I aim directly at the heart and seek to storm it as one would a fortress.' In former times, everyone went hunting, fishing, and dancing on Sunday. Cursing and swearing were considered virtues by many. But now our morning and evening services are well attended. Another evening we have set aside for singing practice, and that, too, has a good influence on young and old. Many boys and young men now sing spiritual songs as they drive home their teams or cattle in the evening. Even though I cannot speak of conversions, I am happy over these changes, knowing that the Lord who has given me courage to counteract corruption will give His blessing in the future."

In 1855 he wrote:

"It has been almost a year since I wrote last and still I have received no reply to any of my letters. We live in a land in which true and honest friends are few; sometimes it seems as though there

are none. For that reason we think of our old friends all the more. But when we do not hear from them for years, we do at times feel as though we have only one Friend in all the world—the best one of all—Him in heaven. Even though I have very little income I would gladly pay \$3.00 annually for postage to get letters from my dear teachers and superiors.

"If I am to write of recent experiences, I must watch myself lest my letter become a lamentation. To write thus would amount to a criticism and accusation against our Heavenly Father. Happy and satisfied I was, living here with my father and sister. I was fortunate in having their support in a material and spiritual way. But this joy did not continue long. Toward the end of May my father contracted fever. With the beginning of June it was my turn, and after several weeks, sister's. Our life was often in danger. During the hot summer months we often suffered terrible chills and then again almost unbearable heat. Father suffered most. He had to be carried from bed to bed. Sister and I had to do this even though our own weakness was so great, that we could hardly stand on our own feet. After four months of suffering, father was called to a better world. For him that was gain, but for us a great loss for he was a providing father and a man who prayed with the faith of a child. Fever-tossed and so weak that I could hardly mount a horse, I accompanied the dear remains to the grave. I could not deliver an address; I simply read an obituary and offered a prayer.

"The illness lasted with sister till the end of November; with me till the end of December. All the while I had to play nurse and do the housework, for nowhere could we get anyone who would help out. I had not been able to conduct services since Pentecost. Still very weak and miserable, I began again with the first Sunday in Advent. In the intervening time the Lord took me aside and spoke seriously to me, to make me more able in His service. It was this experience and assurance that comforted me and upheld me in these trials.

"It was painful to observe the devastation wrought among our people during that period. What we seemed to have won was lost again. But this only made me more earnest in prayer for them, and in my desire to serve them. Thanks be to God for all He did and still does for me.

"I would like to send you a report that would make you happy over accomplishments in our mission field. But because of my physical condition, I could not work for half a year. The newly confirmed could not be further instructed, and they needed it so badly. Many died, but for only one young woman could I deliver a short address; all the rest were carried to God's acre without song or service. I made no visits in the homes, no new missionary tours. Once I tried it, but I had not the strength to hold myself astride my horse, neither could I hold the horse. He stumbled; I fell and hurt myself severely. Thank God I feel nothing of it now, however. But the people have improved. Their desecration of the Sabbath has ceased. They come to

worship regularly. And so I keep on sowing the good seed of the Word of God.

"During the fall I had a happy experience. Following one unsuccessful venture, I finally overcame their suspicion and we agreed to organize a Lutheran congregation. Only a few refused to subscribe to the Constitution, but even they came after a few days and signed it. We have 30 regular members. On New Year we elected four trustees and two weeks later I inducted them into office in a formal service. Thus an important step has been taken, and I would be sorry indeed if the condition of my health would force me to leave next year. This place is one of the most unhealthy in the State. Twice already have I received a request from Carleton, Indiana, that I serve them. There would be advantages for me. But I have no permission of heart and conscience to leave wild Texas. The brethren up north send us contributions. Were it not so we would suffer. Thus God ever proves He is a Father for those who are His children. From all this you will see that we need your prayers and those of all the brethren."

Thus in great loneliness, in prolonged suffering, but withal in faith, love and hope, Pastor Ebinger planted the church at Spring Creek.

Pastor Zizelmann in San Antonio

In our previous chapter we heard that Pastor Zizelmann began his missionary work in La Grange but that, after about a month, he relinquished that field to Pastor Roehm and went on to accept his assignment in San Antonio. We heard of his arrival there on January 10, 1852, and of his first service in the city on the next day. Let us now hear more of this in detail. Here is his own account of those experiences.

"At three o'clock the stage unloaded me at the hotel on the Public Plaza. Had I known the sad days that awaited me I would have fainted for fear. Those afternoon hours from three to six I shall never forget.

"As I stood there, without a cent in my pocket, heavy-hearted and hungry, I surveyed the motley crowd in the hope of finding an advisor. An older man approached me. His red nose gave evidence of the fact that it had cost him plenty of money.

'Are you a greenhorn?' he asked.

'I have been in the country since November.'

'Are you a tradesman?'

'I am a Lutheran pastor.'

'Then hurry to go back where you came from. We have no need of preachers here. In fact we have too many already.'

"But the man had some humanitarian feelings. He accompanied me to a number of houses to help me find a place where I might find room and board. He even took me into a cafe and bought me food and drink. Penniless, hungry, and thirsty as I was, I permitted him

to do this and I appreciated it. When we returned to the street we met a baker who was pushing his cart along. My companion called to him, "This fellow is a countryman of yours, he has no place to stay and no money. But you better look out, he's a preacher. You provide him a hangout." The baker had mercy on me and took me to his unfinished house. In the meantime night had come on. Of this I had become convinced: not a soul was expecting a Lutheran pastor, nor was anyone looking forward to hearing a first sermon from such a one on the next day.

"The baker's house had no floor. For the night I was bedded down on the bare ground. These experiences, with their grief and worry, did not permit me to sleep very much that night. Early in the morning—it was Sunday—a young stonemason looked me up. He had come from a real Christian home and family. He accompanied me to a number of families who might be interested in attending a service. I called also on the pastor of the Episcopal Church. He gladly consented that I use his adobe church for an hour that afternoon, beginning at one o'clock. Well prepared, but not in the highest spirit, I preached. My text was Isaiah 40:6-8. My congregation, including children and several inquisitive negroes, numbered fifteen.

"I soon realized what Brother Kleis meant when he said that conducting a school would be the best way to influence these people who had fallen into the bog of indifference and carelessness. In this interest he had already purchased school supplies in San Antonio. These he transferred to me. So now I, without a cent to my name, faced the problem of repaying my traveling expenses, paying \$12.00 per month for board, \$9.00 for a room, and now a \$90.00 bill for school supplies.

"Without hesitation I assumed the serious and strenuous assignment. By April a two-language school was in progress. It was not large but the teaching was sound and the learning was good. Three times a week I offered confirmation instruction. On Sundays, after the sermon, I spent an hour with the class to review the material we had had during the week. I found that parents and others, who were ashamed to come to church, were attracted by this period. Gradually it seemed that the time was ripe to proceed to the organization of a congregation. A preliminary church council was elected. Recommendations for a building site were made. One of these was a two-acre tract right on the river. It could have been bought for \$200.00.

"On May 20 the Synod was scheduled to meet in Victoria, 110 miles from here. I was the secretary of the Synod. To get there I needed a horse. That young stonemason friend of mine and I bought one, on three week's credit. I rode to New Braunfels and together with Pastor Kleis via Seguin and Gonzales to Victoria. At night we camped near some river or creek and made our beds of Spanish moss of which there is an abundant supply. The glowing heat of day-time travel across the endless prairie, poor drinking water, the nightly camping in the humid woods, sleeping on that damp moss, this unaccustomed climate and mode of living coupled with anxiety and

work, all combined to bring on serious consequences. I began to notice it during our stay in Victoria. I left there with a stupefying headache. With great difficulty I finally reached San Antonio, weak and sick. I dismounted and tied the horse in the yard. An hour later it was stolen. I retired to my bed of straw. For three days I lay there unconscious, in the throes of consuming typhoid fever.

"On the third day, as I was experiencing my first hour of relief, the door opened. A German doctor stepped in. I had made his acquaintance before and he had frequently visited with me. He was known only as 'that crazy doctor', and he was a queer duck. A tragedy somewhere in his past had sent him here. I had often tried to approach the subject, but he never so much as told me his real name. His attitude and answer was: 'My name and my memories shall go to the grave with me, no one shall know who or what I was, I was born to misfortune but in the world to come I hope to find a merciful Judge and a better lot.' Several years later professional jealousies led to his arrest and imprisonment, these in turn led to his death. How gladly I would have set up a grave marker, if only I had known his name. But now back to my story.

"When he came into my room that day and spied me on my bed of straw in the far corner he asked,

'Well, what are you doing there in your nest?'

'Doctor, I am sick.'

'Why did you not let me know?'

'I had no one to send to you, and what is more I have absolutely no money to pay for a doctor's or druggist's bill.'

'Well, then I suppose you will have to croak.'

'But', he continued, 'my friend, I do not want that to happen, neither will I permit it. Will you be satisfied if I take you into my charge and care?'

'Why surely, Doctor, I said, but—'

'He interrupted me to say, 'I'll have nothing more of your if and but. You are, as I am, a poor wretch. I'll treat you, get your medicine and wait on you personally. If you ever get some money you may pay me, if not then we will forget all about it.'

'He examined me carefully and diagnosed it as typhoid. His only comment was, 'That means that we dare lose no time'.

'What a God-send that man proved to be! Like a mother he cared for me. Every day for six long weeks he spent several hours with me. Finally, as I could sit up in bed, and the full impact of the entire situation stared me in the face, I resumed my work to the extent that I had my confirmation class come to me. The consequence was a relapse. To my misfortune, my doctor was away. This was nothing new. He frequently disappeared for two weeks or more, and then returned to his many patients.

"One day, leaning heavily on my cane, I was crossing the street on my way to my Mexican neighbor. And whom should I meet? My

doctor! Roundly and soundly he scolded me for the work I was doing without his permission. His thorough examination revealed a highly inflamed spleen. As for myself I was convinced that tuberculosis had set in. Now a new series of treatment was begun and after several weeks I was so much better. But now I faced a new predicament. I was hungry as a lion and constantly so. I was so afraid to sit down at the table at my boarding house because I had not paid my bill for so long a time. Leaning on my cane, I returned to another phase of my work. I visited in the homes of those with whom I had been associated. I even made some new contacts. And I'll admit it, one reason for doing this was the hope that I would be invited to sit down to lunch. My doctor knew of this situation. Without saying a word to me about it, he set about to find relief. And, lo and behold! One night in August, at one o'clock in the morning, a team halted at my door. My dear Brother, Pastor Oefinger of Castroville, and a member of his congregation at Quihi, came in and announced, 'Your doctor has informed us that you were perishing from hunger and misery here in San Antonio, that at any cost you must get out into the country where you might find food, drink, and fresh air. We have come to take you with us immediately, for the doctor said that you would not be able to stand the trip in the heat of day.' So away we went to the thirty-mile distant Castroville, a neat village on the Medina river west of San Antonio. A few miles up the river lived the family with whom my dear Brother Oefinger had secured quarters for me. The farm was located along the beautiful Medina which is lined with majestic cypress trees. And there I experienced what my doctor, who was present when we left San Antonio, said in farewell: 'There on the farm you will find cucumbers, melons, beans, milk, and many other things in rich abundance. Mrs. Sandleben knows how to make a very good cucumber salad. I want you to eat and drink to your heart's content. This is the best advice I can give you.'

"After about three weeks I was fully restored. I felt as one new born. Here I lived in release from every anxiety and this cheerful hope was revived: my God shall yet remember me, and that unto my salvation."

Though restored to health and strength, Pastor Zizelmann did not feel capable of returning to the work in San Antonio. Lutherans in Fredericksburg had called for a Lutheran pastor. He went there in the hope that the hill-country would be better suited to his health condition. We close this chapter of the Pastor's work in San Antonio with a hymn-prayer he wrote during those dark days. But we must also make this observation. This was not the last chapter of his ministry in that city. Four years later, in 1856, he returned to the work he had begun, that had been untouched by human hands in the meantime. His new energies, under God's blessing, led to the organization of the great St. John Lutheran Church there. In that experience too was fulfilled his hymn-prayer of that earlier day.

"Hear, O God, my sighing,
Hearken to my crying,
Be my staff and stay.

Thou alone canst guide me
And with light provide me
On my further way.

Thou dost know

My plight and woe;

Let not dread despair o'take me, To Thy child now humbly pleading,
And Thy mercy needing,
Let not faith forsake me.

"Lord of all creation,

Thou wilt send salvation,

Bid my fears be gone!

Wilt my trust restore me,

Blaze the trail before me,

And in truth lead on.

God of old,

My plight behold!

Grant me songs of praise for sorrow,

Brighten my tomorrow."

—Translated by the Rev. A. L. Wolff, D. D.
Used by permission of his family.

THE BUILDING OF CHURCHES

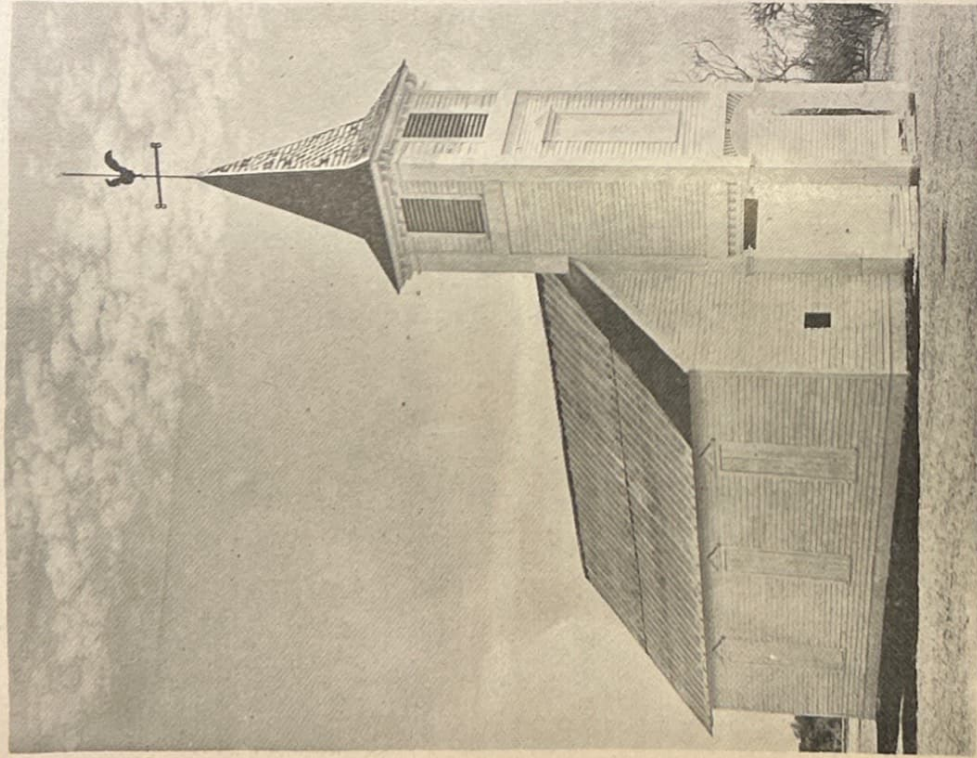
Now that we have seen this planting of the Lutheran Church in Texas in terms of the church organization that was set up, and in the efforts put forth by the pioneer pastors, let us now see this process of planting in another experience. "The Kingdom of God is within you", Jesus said. The church is composed of people. Just the same, the building of places of worship has always been an important phase in the planting of the Church. The increase of their number should ever be evidence of the spreading of that Kingdom. But where was the first Lutheran church built in Texas? We believe that the question can be answered without fear of contradiction.

Neighborsville and Hortontown

From the very recently resurrected, original records of St. Martin Lutheran Church of Neighborsville and Hortontown we take the following story.

"In the year 1851 the Evangelical Lutheran congregation in Neighborsville, Guadalupe County, erected a House of God. Th. Kleis was the pastor of the congregation at that time. This building, which was thus dedicated to the public worship of the Triune God, was named: 'St. Martin Church' by the above-named Pastor. The friendly location and view is enhanced by a slight elevation two miles to the northeast of the city of New Braunfels. The building was constructed entirely of cedar wood by Messrs. Ludwig, Heinrich, and Christian Heinemeier. Only the foundation wall is of stone. The interior of this House of God, built by Mr. Koehler, is simple and

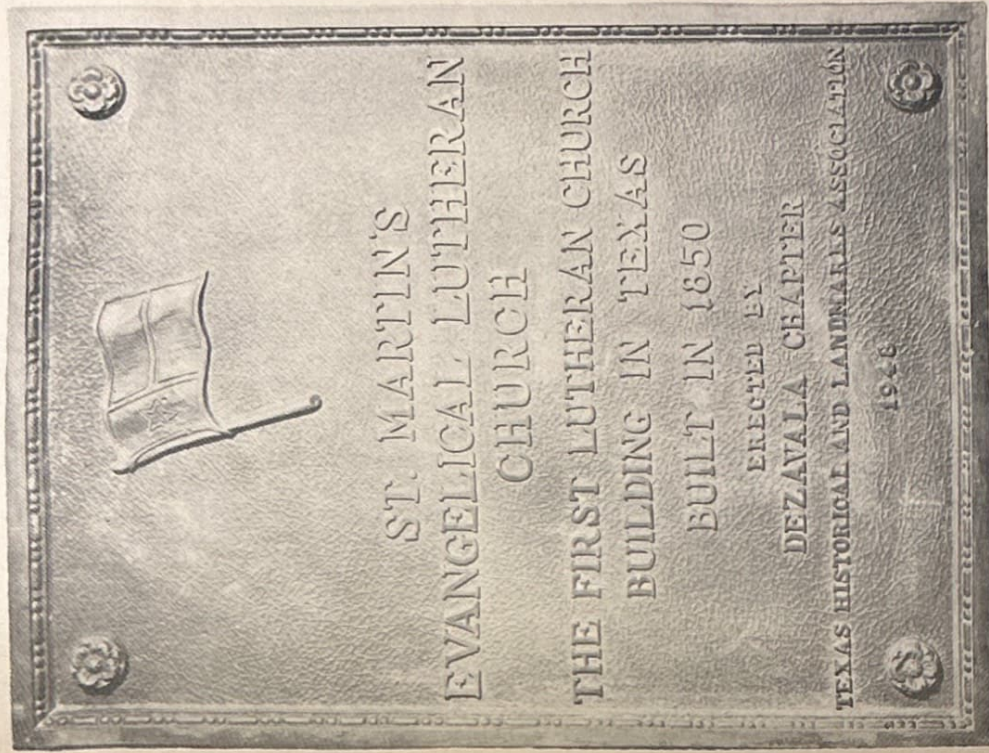
neat. The length is 36 feet, the width 24 feet, and the height is 20 feet. This neat Sanctuary will hold from 150 to 180 people, and each Sunday worship services have been conducted there. Since the congregation is still weak but growing, and since no school house is on hand, school instructions are given in the church."



ST. MARTIN LUTHERAN CHURCH
Neighborsville-Hortontown

On page 19 of the same records we read:

"The following contributions were paid in 1851 by the named members of the congregation to the trustees of the congregation and to Pastor Th. Kleis and were used for the new church."



BRONZE PLAQUE
Neighborsville-Hortontown Church

The left-hand column on that page contains 33 names. Inclusive of a special offering in the amount of \$46.00, the contributions totaled \$251.50. The right-hand column lists the building expenses, which totaled \$253.00. The secretary added the comment, "We note an excess expense of \$1.50."

According to some of the older present-day residents of the community, men and women who attended school and church at St. Martin in the days of their childhood, the building was incomplete when first placed into service. This is verified by entries on pages 12 to 15 in the records. There we find lists of contributions and expenditures over the years 1851

to 1854. The expenditures cover such items as a table, four windows, two doors, locks, cabinet work, and flooring. On page 71 are listed the expenditures for the foundation wall: three loads of stone at \$9.00, one load of good lime at \$1.50, and labor at \$5.50. Other items listed include covers for the altar and pulpit and two yards of fringe at 60 cents. On page 72 we find the financial report for the fiscal year October 1, 1853, to October 1, 1854. This includes the payment of \$100.00 principal and \$20.00 for the interest of two years. These amounts were paid to Messrs. L. and C. Heinemeyer on a loan. When other expenses were paid, the treasury had a deficit of \$5.50. At the end of the statement we read this addition: "N.B. These \$5.50 were advanced by Pastor H. Braschler and constitute the only debt of the congregation." On page 27, under date of March 1, 1857, we find the Pastor's annotation in the margin of the previous year's financial statement: "Members of the congregation reimbursed me for the \$5.00 I previously advanced. August (son) Dauer 20 cents, father Dauer \$4.80, total \$5.00."

When the church was first built it had a double door on the south side. This afforded the worshippers an inspiring view when they left their House of God. Out there, at but a short distance, and in a wide sweep, the valley of the Guadalupe river lay before them. In 1880 the building was renovated. The low, flat roof was replaced by one of steeper pitch, a tower was added at the north end, and the entrance was moved from the side to the tower end of the building—even as it is today.

Meyersville

But what of other early churches? An interesting story is found in the "Chronicles" of the Meyersville congregation.

"When the Dreier family was passing through Victoria on their way to Meyersville, they made the acquaintance of a Methodist pastor by the name of Bauer. He visited the small group of Christians from time to time and brought comfort to their sad and discouraged hearts, and tried to uphold their Christian spirits.

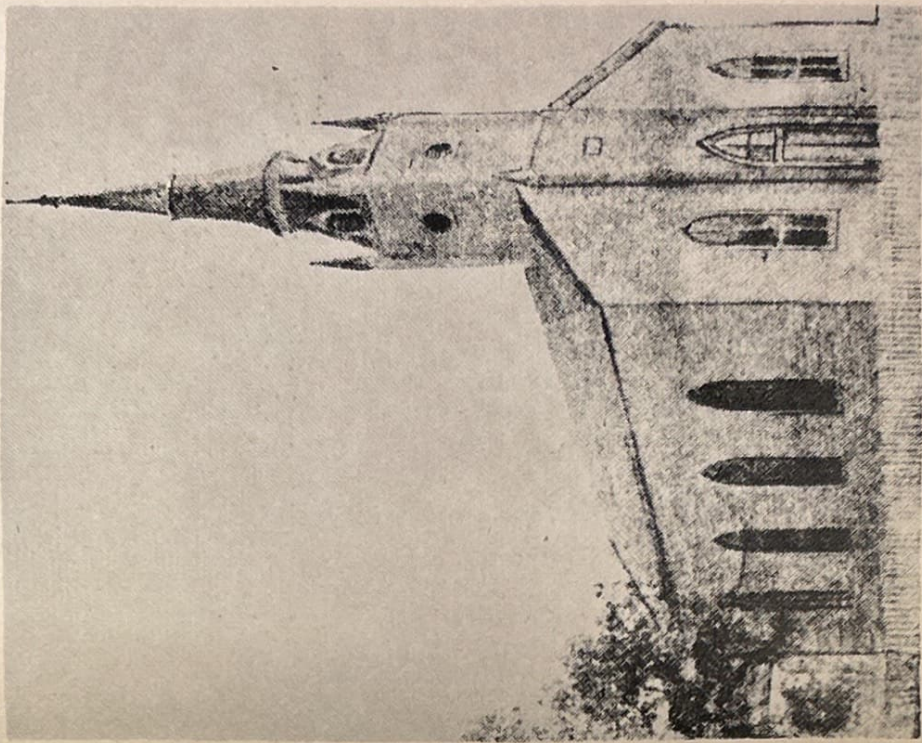
"Later the Methodist pastor, named Grote, came here. He encouraged them to build a house unto the Lord. This was unanimously supported. Mr. Christoph Thieme donated an acre of land for the building site. Some time later the congregation bought five additional acres from him at a dollar per acre and received a deed from him for the same. The house that should serve as a church was built according to Texas style and type of architecture—a log house. Later a log-cabin parsonage was added to the property.

"However, when Pastor Grote insisted that the land and church be transferred and deeded to the Methodist Church, a difference of opinion arose which led to a separation from the Methodist Church. At about the same time the Chrischona Mission Society at Basel was beginning to send pastors to Texas. From there a man by the name of Sager came to us and everyone accorded him Christian hospitality. Pastor Sager succeeded in establishing an Evangelical Lutheran congregation."

Pastor Sager's group used the church they had formerly built. Its erection, it is true, ante-dates the church built at Neighborsville-Horton-town. But it was erected under Methodist auspices and only later became a Lutheran Church, whereas the Neighborsville church from its inception was named and known as the Lutheran Church. When the Meyersville congregation erected a new and larger church that was built of stone, and dedicated it at the time of the meeting of the Synod there on May 9 to 13, 1867, the first church was taken down and its logs used by members for other building purposes. It is said that some of them are still in existence, serving in a barnyard fence.

Houston

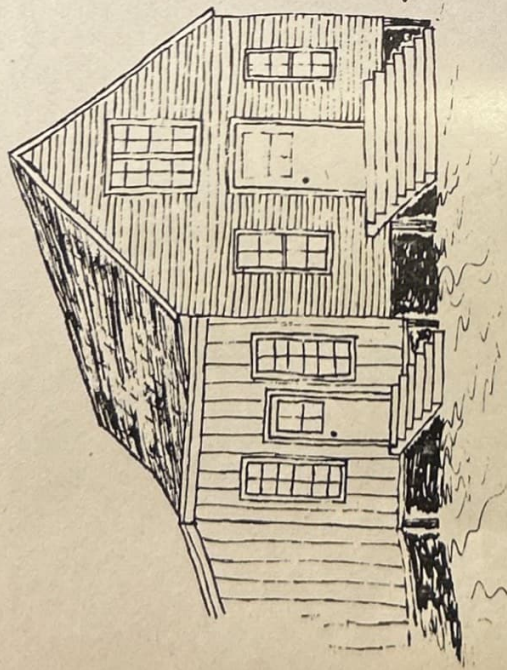
Another interesting story of church building comes from Houston. In his presidential report to the Second Convention of the Synod, at Victoria



FIRST EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH
Houston, Texas
Dedicated on Christmas Day, 1854

on May 22 to 24, 1852, Pastor Braun reported: "Churches are being built in Neighborsville, Victoria, and Houston".

His own building interests in Houston centered in the erection of a building used mainly as a church school. Services were conducted there till the church was built in 1854 and dedicated on Christmas Day of that year. An addition, of box type construction, built on to the side of the school building likely served as the Pastor's first residence.



PASTOR BRAUN'S SCHOOL AND PARSONAGE
Houston, Texas

A most interesting angle of the story of this building is that, in the words of Pastor Braun's grandson, "It was built with the help of friendly Indians." Asked for an explanation he gave the following story.

"Somewhere around 1800 an Indian chief and his tribe came south to escape the cold. They settled at the junction of Buffalo and Brays Bayou. They were friendly Indians and helped the early settlers survive the hardships by teaching them how to get food and herbs for medicine and how to preserve them. The daughter of that Chief, named Little Flower, married a former ship captain. He was one of those who fell at San Jacinto. Their daughter, Margaret Bohmert, became Mrs. Caspar Braun, my grandmother. Some of the Indians were living in Houston as late as 1890 and all of them were good friends of my grandfather, the Pastor."

Victoria

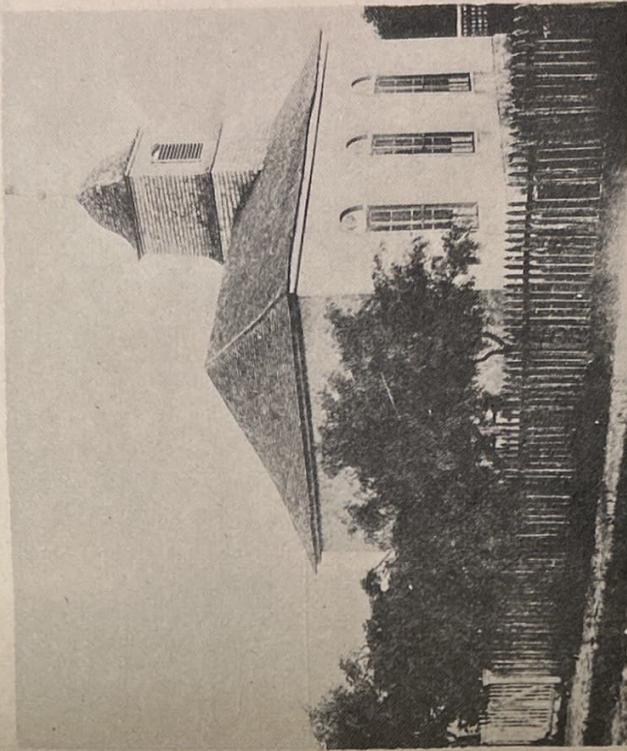
Pastor Braun's report, "Churches are being built at Neighborsville, Victoria, and Houston", must be viewed in the light of history. His own church was not actually built until 1854. As concerns Victoria the follow-

ing comment, taken from the records of that congregation will bear this out.

"On December 5, 1852, another meeting was held A lot was purchased from the Victoria Corporation for the sum of \$20.00 which was paid for in three installments. The building of a church was started, and it was completed in 1853".

Castroville and Quihi

History was made in Castroville and Quihi when, as the Minutes of the Fourth Convention which was held in Castroville on April 28 to May 2, 1854, report: "Great energy was demonstrated especially in Brother Oefinger's congregations. Each of them erected a stone church during the past year." Another reference to this event is found in the same Minutes: "The Conference of the Western District met at Castroville. At that time the Bethlehem church at Quihi was dedicated to the Triune God." Other churches built thus far had been built of logs or lumber. These were built of stone, the Synod's first.



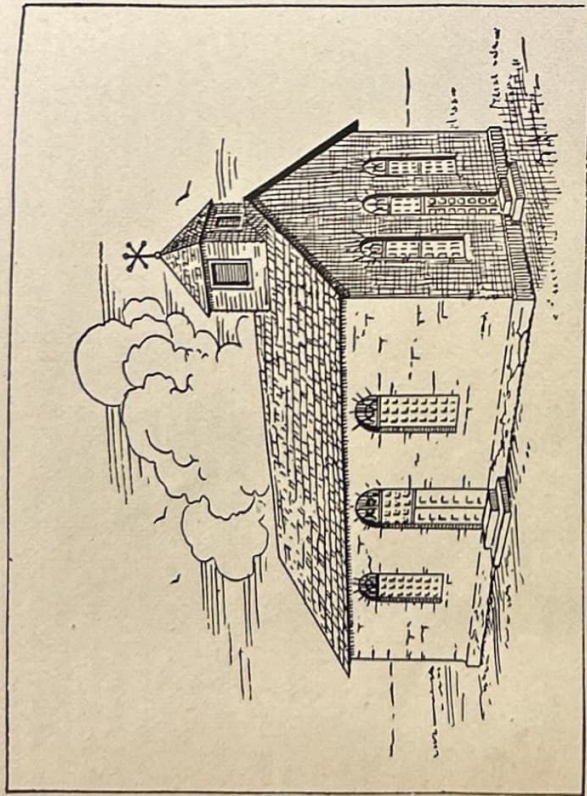
ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH
Castroville, Texas

Fredericksburg

In the same Minutes we find the statement: "Pastor Zizelmann reports that his Zion's congregation in Fredericksburg is rapidly complet-

ing construction of its church. He hopes that he will be able to conduct services there in the near future".

Here too is a real story of love's labor. The congregation counted thirteen voting members, but "we can count on only eight or nine for the building project, the others are only sons at home or older men without income." The source of income of any of them was very limited beyond the necessities of life.



ZION LUTHERAN CHURCH
Fredericksburg, Texas

Still, a building site was bought for \$50.00 cash. The plains were drawn by the Pastor. The church measured 50 feet in length, 36 feet in width, and the walls were 20 feet high. Native rock was present in abundance, cedar wood was 130 miles away; so it was easy to decide to build the church of stone. A quarry was opened. A kiln for the burning of lime was constructed. The Pastor served also as the general overseer, each morning assignments were made to the available manpower. Many a night he took his place as fireman at the kiln; he contracted a cold that with its complications brought him near to his grave. Typical of the spirit that made the undertaking a success are these two examples: "Mr. R. hauled 136 loads of water and sand, and put in 126 days of labor. Mr. K. and his son hauled 100 loads of rock and lumber, and each contributed 138 days as carpenters." Pastor Zizelmann wrote: "Thus we built the church within a year," and "Where there's a will you will also find a way."

An interesting sidelight is provided in the Minutes of the Third Convention, held at Galveston on April 14 to 16, 1853. Of the money collected

by Pastor Kleis in northern and eastern congregations for church building in Texas, Pastor Strobel received \$25.00 for the church in Victoria, and Pastor Sager received \$5.50 for the purchase of two windows for his church in Meyersville. After setting \$100.00 aside for emergency support, the unspecified balance was turned over to Pastors Oefinger and Braun. In the Minutes of the Castroville convention, 1854, we read that the Synod gave hearty endorsement to Pastor Zizelmann's application to the General Synod's Committee on Church Extension for financial support to his Fredericksburg church building program.

Spring Branch

Another "story for the record" comes from Spring Branch, near Houston. This mission was begun by Pastor David Ankele in 1853. He was followed by a number of the members of the Synod. Pastor B. M. Hall-finger lies buried there. Today the church is known as St. Peter Evangelical and Reformed Church, in Houston. But here is the church building story:

"Shortly after the holidays of Christmas 1849 the men of the seven families went out into the woods to cut logs for their first log cabin church. When the logs were cut and prepared, they were left in the woods to become well seasoned before the construction of the building was to be begun. After a few months the men went out to haul the logs to the site of their first Thanksgiving service. Great was their disappointment when they discovered that their logs had been stolen, and probably sold as cross-ties for the Houston and Texas Central railroad then under construction. Undaunted the men cut new logs, but this time they took them to the home of William Rummel where they could be seasoned under watchful eyes. Finally a log cabin church was erected, five years after the first services were held. This building served the people for ten years, 1854 to 1864, as their house of worship."

Other Churches of This Period

Thus this particular phase of the planting of the Church, the erection of churches, was under way. Other congregations fell in line as the need arose. From the Minutes of the Synod we have tried to compile also this roll call of honor. Those coming into consideration here are only those that fall into the time period of this story, the pioneer period of approximately twenty-five years. In setting up the list we have tried to be accurate, but admit the possibility of oversight in some instances.

Galveston: bought "the Lyceum Building" in 1855, erected the first church in 1868.

Comaltown: 1855.

Berlin near Brenham: July 1, 1855.

Round Top: June 3, 1857.

Salem, near Brenham: March 8, 1857.

Rabbs Prairie, or Serbin: June 5, 1859.
 Ross Prairie: December 26, 1859.
 St. John, San Antonio: 1860, improved 1871, added tower 1875.
 New Orleans: December 17, 1860.
 White Oak, near Houston: 1860.
 Independence: 1860.
 Frelsburg: 1860, remodeled and dedicated June 12, 1870.
 Meyersville, second, stone church: May 12, 1867, at the time of the Synod meeting.
 New Ulm: 1868.
 Arneckeville: November 1, 1868, second church on May 9, 1875.
 Welcome, near Industry: 1869.
 Black Jack Springs: May 8, 1870, at the time of the Synod meeting.
 Concrete: St. Paul church, May 15, 1870.
 New Wehder, near Brenham: Pentecost, June 16, 1870.
 Seguin: August 1870.
 Union Hill, Rehburg, or Burton: November 6, 1870.
 Strunkville, Colorado County: 1870.
 Labadie Prairie, Zionsville: January 29, 1871.
 Columbus: August 25, 1872.
 Coletto, near Victoria. St. Peter church: August 10, 1873.
 Rabbs Creek, Cross church, Warda: August 24, 1873.
 Mason: October 12, 1873, 18th Sunday after Trinity.
 Warrenton: December 26, 1873.
 Prairie Hill, near Brenham: January 7, 1877.
 Hallettsville, Salem church: September 10, 1876.

As we now look back to the date of the beginning of organized Lutheran work in Texas, November 10 to 12, 1851, what could the Synod list as its assets? It had a Constitution nicely written out on paper, it had one organized congregation or two, it had ten pastors. There were no funds, no real estate, no buildings. All assets were personal, spiritual. But are not these the talents that make one "rich in God"? And did the Christ

not promise that when His talents are invested they shall be multiplied? Or, to come to the picture in which our story is cast, did He not promise that the planting of the seed of His word would yield a harvest, even thirty, sixty, and hundred fold?

As we now look over the assets of the Synod after a period of twenty-five years of planting, as these tangible and intangible assets are represented in the increase of the number of pastors, in the congregations that were organized, and in this series of church buildings enumerated above, surely we must marvel how widespread the field has become, and how richly God had blessed the efforts of His planters!

CHAPTER IV

THE WEEDS—THE DIFFICULTIES ENCOUNTERED

As we turn to this final chapter of this section and select the given title, we are fully conscious of the fact that the parable of the mustard seed, which underlies our trend of thought in the entire presentation, has nothing to say of weeds. It was a consideration outside of Jesus' point of comparison and so did not enter His picture. Confident that even the planter of the mustard seed had to contend with weeds, drawing from the several other parables on the general subject, and facing the undeniable facts and realities in every undertaking of planting, we proceed with the portrayal as it attends the story in hand. Many indeed are the weeds we discover as we survey the situation!

PREVAILING CONDITIONS

As stated before, the Church is planted, under God, by and in people. But it is also true that prevailing economic, social, political, and personal circumstances too often condition the people with whom and in whom He has to do His work. They advance or retard the Kingdom as they advance or retard the people concerned. Therefore, as we permit the facts presented in the previous chapters of this story to pass in quick review, we easily detect these conditions, weeds we have called them, that adversely affected the planting and the development of this Lutheran Church in Texas.

From the viewpoint of time, there was first of all the political domination of the Roman Catholic Church over the governments of Spain and Mexico. Thus they forbade any and all Protestant colonists in Texas, all worship services or church programs intended to establish or expand this spirit and type of Christianity. When the Republic won her sovereignty on April 21, 1836, Protestant Christianity won her freedom as well.

We think of the problem of transportation brought on by the lack of roads over the vast stretches of the State in those days. The problem takes on form in the trail of tragedy along which the Adels-Verein immigrants made their way from Matagorda Bay to New Braunfels and on to Fredericksburg; in that stage coach trip that Pastors Oefinger, Roehm, Strobel, and Zizelmann made from Houston to La Grange; in that 90 mile march three of them made from there to Neighborsville near New Braunfels. Their experiences were the experiences of multiplied tens of thousands who came here. The situation affected not only their personal movements. It affected the channels of trade and supplies, and these meant life and livelihood. How this had an adverse bearing on the work of the church any imagination can easily see, and any searcher after details will find them heap upon heap.

We face the fact of abject poverty in which many of the grandparents of our church members of today had to make their new start in life here. The ravages of the Napoleonic wars in Europe and their aftermath, had brought many of them to the verge of economic ruin. The last vestiges of possessions were invested in ship passage to the land of new hope. After arriving here they were dealt a final and staggering blow. Bad foresight and mismanagement on the part of the sponsoring immigration organizations robbed them of the support promised them toward establishing themselves on the land. "Empty-handed" and "bare-handed" are descriptive terms that were literally true. And even the tools of work had to be made crudely by those hands from native resources. Sweat, blood and tears were often mingled in the process. What this situation meant in terms of support for the work of the Kingdom, the building of churches, support for pastors, their wives and children, only they know who suffered the bitter experience.

How great was the number of those who fell victim to the terrific change from Europe's climate to that of Texas, and to the associated conditions affecting health! We recall the plague that swept through the camps at Carlshafen, Indianola, during the unusually long season of cold and rain; and recall that these conditions became even worse when spring and summer set in with their humidity, heat, mosquitoes, chills, fever, malaria, and such more. The years covered by our story are the years in which yellow fever was the scourge of Texas, in which entire families and even whole communities were wiped out. From a letter of Pastor Jaeggli to Pastor Sager we quote, "Within a period of a few weeks near to 200 people were sent into eternity at nearby La Grange." These conditions were no respecters of person. Church people, pastors and their families suffered and were swept away with the rest of the population. In 1869 ten congregations reported 335 deaths among their members. We recall the siege of illness Pastor Ebinger endured at Spring Creek; that Pastor Kleis had to leave his post after a bare two years of service and died within the next two years; Pastor Zizelmann's siege of typhoid fever in San Antonio; and there is the statement of Pastor Roehm, "a year of suffering, illness, and death lies behind us". The number of deaths among the pastors was very large in terms of the percentage of their numbers, due to their exposure to danger and contagion in response to the call of service under all these adverse conditions. And the list of vacancies was made even longer because a good number had time to escape, after the Grim Reaper started knocking at their door, to seek medical attention and recuperation in northern states or in Europe.

Not to be overlooked was the danger and loss suffered at the hands of the native Indians. In fact, there was strong complaint against the unfairness of settling American colonists in the more protected older areas of the State, and the European immigrants on the northern and western frontiers where exposure to Indian raids on life and property was more pronounced. As late as 1866 the District President's report states that the November conference at Fredericksburg could not be held "because of fear of the Indians".

The wars of those days left their mark, too. We have already re-

ferred to the sacrifices brought and the loyalties demonstrated by the European immigrants in the days of the struggle for independence. When the war between the United States and Mexico caught the more than 5,000 immigrants at Galveston and Carlshafen, Indianola, "some 500 of the young men joined the United States army and went to Mexico". The devastating effect on those who had recently arrived when the Houston teamsters broke their contract for the higher wages paid by the army has been told.

The Civil War laid a very heavy hand on the people with whom we are concerned; and the work of the Synod, just beginning to blossom and flourish, was brought to a grinding halt. Stephen F. Austin, prince of Texas colonizers, had once expressed his appreciation of German and Swiss colonists in these words, "And above all, they will oppose slavery." Austin was himself from south of the Mason and Dixon line. But just this respect for human life and freedom made the German colonists, including the Lutheran pastors and church members, the object of suspicion, false accusation, and persecution when Texas lined up with the Confederacy. When lack of appreciation for the underlying cause of slavery held back military manpower, "conscription gangs" raided the villages and isolated homes and pressed the able-bodied men and boys into service—or, at the hands of unauthorized radicals, some were found at sunrise hanging from a tree or shot to death. The CHRONICLES of the Meyersville congregation might be taken as a general portrayal of the situation.

"1860. The war with its blockade has cut off our communications. Consequently all prices have been multiplied by five and ten, even necessities of life are noticeably scarce. Our accustomed freedom has retreated into the background for the Government has demanded a unity of thought; a deep silence is the choice of wisdom. A number of the sons of our congregation have placed themselves at the disposal of the Governor. All men in the ages of 18 to 50 participate in military drill every two weeks. On November 28 our congregation heeded the Governor's proclamation and observed a day of repentance and prayer. The sermon text was Joel 2:12-18.

"1861. God has withheld all rain. He permitted us to plant but not to reap. No one may travel from one county to another without a pass. This has brought trade to a standstill. Speculation has driven prices to dizzy heights. The Confederate money system has placed a crown upon a lot of fraud. Conscription has placed all 18 to 35 year old men into a three year period of military service. Quite a number of the heads of families had to leave home and field, wife and children. Others preferred to serve the Government as teamsters and so have fallen to a better lot. One father and two young men died as soldiers.

"1863. Five adults and thirteen children were buried in our cemetery. Memorial services were conducted for two fathers and one youth who perished in Louisiana.

"1864. The future grows darker and darker. Only old men and

boys up to the age of fifteen can safely be at home. Wives of soldiers receive food and clothes from the County. War taxes continue to rise in addition to a tenth of our products that must be turned in.

"1865. When will our boys and husbands return from the field of battle or from exile to enjoy peace with us? Often are we frightened by bands of returning soldiers. On May 25 our Ascension Day services were suddenly interrupted by the report that horse-thieves were abroad; everyone went home. On May 31 eleven robbers raided the local store. A company of about 40 men was then organized, they alternated in standing guard day and night. On the evening of June 3, the day of Pentecost, about twenty men tried to raid the store again. But they were detected in time and when the alarm was sounded they fled in haste. Since then we have had peace, but every wagon that dares to travel on the public road is plundered.

"1866. The congregation accepted the resolution: 'In token of our thanks to God for the return of peace and our deliverance out of times of terror we shall build the Lord a new house'. On Ascension Day a subscription list was prepared and left at the store so that every friend of the congregation might indicate his free-will subscription'.

Other events or expressions that help to light up those times are such as these. At the convention of the Synod, at Quilhi in April 1861, the following resolution was adopted. "In spite of the political disturbances, we desire to declare our heartfelt love for the entire Lutheran Church whether in the North or in the South. Though we may be separated politically, in church relations we desire to feel we are and remain in harmony and in union. Our obligation is not to preach political issues, but rather the Gospel."—Because of prevailing conditions no meetings of the Synod were held in 1863 and 1864.—In 1865 Pastor Schall reported to Chrischona headquarters, "In age I have grown four years older, in loss of strength and vitality it must be eight"—At the same time Pastor Roehm wrote, "I had hoped that the pressure of need and sorrow would bring a spiritual harvest in the congregation and the Synod. The opposite is true. May God have mercy on us. The war has had a detrimental effect on the religious and moral life of the people. There is less hunger for the word of truth, less fruit of our labors."—Prior to the war 500 New Testaments, printed in German and English, had been secured from Basel. When the 1865 convention of the Synod, held in Victoria, found that 150 of these were still on hand, it was decided that they should be distributed free of charge to poor soldiers.—The years brought tensions and disorders in church matters. Outstanding perhaps was the fact that Pastors Kypfer and Moegle took matters into their own hands and ordained catechist C. Meier and candidate of theology C. Fischer.—For a final and brighter view we turn once more to the records at Meyersville: "Through these experiences many have been led to seek comfort and consolation in the Word of God, and the place where God is honored and worshipped is filled with many people."

THE SPIRIT OF MANY IMMIGRANTS

While the conditions just portrayed might with reservations be classified as being beyond the control of individuals, it is different with the situation we now face. Here we have a very personal problem.

Said one author in speaking in broad and general terms, "Texas was not colonized by the Pilgrim Fathers nor by the Puritans". Even after we make allowances for the liabilities of those New England colonists, they still have a definite plus over a very large percent of those who sought home and fortune in Texas.

We shall here consider exclusively the European immigrants, for it was with them that our pioneer pastors were concerned. Those who came over in the first years, up to and inclusive of the Adels-Verein immigrants, were mainly those who came because they were forced out by the prevailing economic and social conditions. Religious freedom seems to have been more or less a negative element with them. By and large, they had little Christianity left in them after wave upon wave of the continental wars had rolled over them. Too many of them came without Bible, catechism, hymnal, prayer or devotional literature. But it was quite different with the "Forty-eighters", those who came over after the failure of the revolution of 1848. Too many of that group were definitely radical: radical reformers of the political, economic, social, and religious levels of life. Many of them were definitely non-religious and anti-religious. Many of them had absorbed this spirit as university teachers or students. This "advantage of education" gave them the daring to be loud-mouthed about their ideals and to press their ideas upon the less educated and those whose limited vision prevented them from seeing the they usually elbowed their way into places of prominence and made consequences of their proposals. Upon arrival in the Texas settlements themselves the "spokesmen of the masses". The targets of their barbs in private and in public were the laymen who had brought with them religious interests and convictions, and especially the pastors who sought to harness those interests and convictions to the developing program of the Kingdom of God.

These definitely were the weeds planted by the evil one to hem and stem the Church, to make men weary and despondent, to try their souls and break them in health and heart. Of such things Pastor Zizelmann wrote from La Grange to Mr. Spittler on that first Christmas Eve he spent in Texas. "Texas is now and always will be a mission field. The church of Jesus will be able to establish herself freely and fully. But such is the case also with rationalism and atheism. We have joined combat with these forces. Therefore pray for us that none of us fall or fall in this struggle." What he had reference to were experiences he spoke of to Pastor Roehm, "I found four or five German families and also a large number of prominent American families. The latter are more interested in school and church than the former. Most of them are quite religious, while the Germans are often an offense and are usually looked down upon by the Americans". Such was the spirit of that red-nosed individual who greeted Pastor Zizelmann on his arrival in San Antonio

with, "A Lutheran pastor? Then hurry back to where you came from. We have no need of preachers here, in fact we have too many already". And after he had been in that city for some time he wrote another lengthy report to Mr. Spittler. We quote a pertinent statement, "Of the protestants I can say little that is good. The larger number belong to the so-called cultured class. Yet I hardly know one of them who does not make it his business to ridicule religion. That the influence of such works like a cancer, you well know". This particular "weed" showed its head on many an occasion, and in many places. Two more quotations shall suffice. In his annual report to the Synod meeting at Castroville, in 1854, the President said, "Several of the brothers can report, in praise to God, that a number of souls committed to their care walk in the ways of truth and honor their Christian profession. Predominating, however, is the lament because of this great carelessness and indifference over against everything religious, and this unbelievable bog-down in things material and temporal". And again we read in a like report at the convention in Comaltown, in 1856, "Two churches were built, the number of congregations is growing and the number of members in the congregations is on the increase. But everywhere the brethren complain of the forces of unbelief".

A consequence of this situation was the lack of friendly confidence and the presence of cold suspicion with which the pastors were greeted in their missionary endeavors. It was this situation that led to the general adoption of the policy of Pastor Kleis, "Conduct a school for the children, that is the best way to influence and win their elders". This situation also accounts for the fact that so frequently when congregations were to be organized on a positive, Biblical, Lutheran basis there was great hesitation or even opposition. Typical illustrations were the experiences of Pastor Braschler in Neighborsville-Hortontown or Pastor Ebinger in Berlin near Brenham. After Pastor Kleis had labored for two years in the former place and Pastor Braschler had added another, better than two years after they had built a church, we read that when it came to committing themselves to a definite and positive constitution "a confusion developed and all went home without accomplishing anything". And of the latter place we read, "When the Pastor wanted to introduce the recommended order he found strong opposition. But the majority yielded. However in the next meeting the minority succeeded in setting the constitution aside and one of them tore it to shreds. They insisted on writing their own".

OTHER DENOMINATIONS

The days covered by this story were the days in which the Church was free to develop itself. But the saints often showed that they were "converted only in spots". Also in the realm of religion, liberty and license were often confused. Freedom led to "a free for all". Enthusiasts and zealots thought it their duty to "fight the devil and each other". The pages of our history are not altogether free from this drag of the dragon's tail.

When Pastors Kleis and Sager landed at Galveston they were set upon by Methodist missionaries who tried to enlist them in their ser-

vice. The name of a Pastor Rotenstein appears on several occasions; with eloquence and earnest persuasion he addressed the Synod in session in Galveston, in 1853; seemingly he had the former president, Pastor Braun, captivated; there are evidences that his intention was to direct and to deliver the Lutheran group into the camp of his own denomination. His spirit and approach was cordial. Quite different was that of a certain Pastor Young of the same denomination. He caused at least one article to be published in his church paper in which he attacked the Synod in slanderous fashion. And from the history of the Meyersville congregation we recall still another kind of method used at making inroads on a Lutheran settlement by Pastor Grote.

In New Orleans Pastors Hollander and Koelle, of the Presbyterian Church, contacted two men on their way from St. Chrischona to Texas as their ship docked there. They made every effort to persuade them to serve with them in their denominational ranks. The President's report to the Synod in 1870 gives the detailed information on that incident.

Perhaps the most organized and determined opposition was experienced at the hands of a group of Free Protestant pastors. Over the signatures of Pastor G. W. Eisenlohr of New Braunfels, B. Dangers of Fredericksburg, and F. Weissgerber of Galveston, and a number of their congregations' representatives, they sent a long letter of protest to the church authorities in Europe that had sponsored the sending of the men of the Texas Synod. A review of their protest reveals these accusations: these men are traitors to the school which has given them even their inadequate training, and to the church government which has ordained them, for "they have conjured from the grave of the past their particular denominational position" and "they have raised the party-flag of 'old' Lutheranism"; furthermore, instead of going to places where the field is unoccupied they have entered communities of organized congregations and there have created confusion and strife. This communication created quite a stir on both sides of the Atlantic. But after the school and the church authorities in Europe made their investigation and weighed the evidences submitted by both sides, the case was decided against those who had made the protest. Nevertheless, the leaders of the movement continued to belittle and accuse the Synod and its pastors through the medium of their own church press.

RELATIONS WITH OTHER LUTHERANS

The pastors who came to Texas in 1850 and 1851 were the first Lutheran pastors to occupy the field, and their First Evangelical Lutheran Synod in Texas was the first organization of that denomination that was set up to establish and supervise that Church's work. From the very beginning these men were very conscious of their geographical isolation. Immediately they began to cast about for points of contact. Already at the Second Convention, at Victoria in 1852, the convention reports and official communications of four eastern and northern Lutheran church bodies were made the subject of study and were reported on by committees. This practice was continued as the years went by, and the number of such reports increased. Thus cordial relations and contacts were

established that found their fruition in 1853 when the Synod voted to affiliate with the General Synod, a federation of Lutheran bodies whose work was spread over most of the eastern and northern states.

The first on-the-scene contact with representatives or members of another Lutheran body was experienced at the Fifth Convention, at Fredericksburg in 1855. Three Scherer brothers, Jacob, Gideon, and John, members of the Synod of West Virginia and stationed at Columbus, requested membership in the Synod—but on their own terms. They insisted that the Synod change the confessional paragraph of its constitution; instead of recognizing all the historical Lutheran documents of doctrine, as they are contained in the Formula of Concord, they urged that only the Augsburg Confession be recognized along with Holy Scriptures. The members of the Synod present at the meeting did not feel that this would be an advisable thing to do, that all members should be consulted before so drastic a change would be made, and so they tabled the matter for the time being. Later conventions took a definite stand for the original position. The Scherer brothers never affiliated with the Synod.

On December 12, 1854, a group of more than 500 Wendish people, hailing from various sections of Prussia and Saxony in Germany, landed at Galveston. Their spiritual leader was Pastor J. Kilian. They established their colony at Serbin, near the line between Lee and Bastrop counties. The group affiliated with the Lutheran Missouri Synod. Thereafter pastors of that body began to establish themselves in Texas. A separation took place within the Serbin congregation in 1858 and St. Peter church of Rabbs Creek was organized. The congregation requested affiliation with the Synod, was finally received and served. According to the Minutes of the convention of 1861, the President of the Missouri Synod had written a very cordial letter in September of the previous year and had expressed his Synod's agreement in the matter. Nevertheless, the situation proved to be a difficult one for many years; like others it flared into print in the church papers, it led to the locking of the church door by contending parties, and to the threat of a case at law.—The Minutes of 1871 report the request for a release from membership in the Synod from Pastor C. G. Moedinger in New Orleans. It carried the additional request, "Please put a charitable construction on my action". His release to the Missouri Synod was authorized within two days.—The Minutes of 1875 report concerning Pastor F. Jesse, "Over against efforts at coaxing him to join the Missouri Synod he has taken a manly stand".

Many other Lutheran bodies were torn, and often rent asunder, by a passionate study of and heated debate over doctrinal questions. They were especially the so-called "Four Points": chiliasm or the doctrine of the return of Christ and issues related thereto, secret societies, pulpit fellowship, and altar or communion fellowship. Others were the doctrine concerning the proper observance of Sunday, and the doctrine on the election of the saints and pre-destination. These subjects were given serious and sincere study in private, at conferences, and on the floor of the annual conventions. These studies led to a better appreciation of the Biblical presentation in each case, to united action in the framing of position and policy. The ranks of the Synod were not broken over

these issues, but the "Four Points" did have much to do with the Synod's withdrawal from the General Synod and its affiliation with the General Council.

PERSONAL, BESETTING SIN

As a last evidence of the presence of "the weeds" that made difficult the planting of the Church, we shall take a respectful but searching look at the planters themselves. We feel confident that, by and large, the men of the First Evangelical Lutheran Synod were as capable and consecrated, as patient and persevering, as any group placed by any church organization in any mission field. And yet it is true that they were men. They were men who, on the one hand, were under the Spirit of God, who, on the other hand, needed to exercise the grace of repentance and faith.

They were "prisoners of their times". The limitations and handicaps placed upon them by the conditions under which they lived and labored, the opposition they faced on many sides, the stupendous proportions of the task at which they served, and their sense of responsibility before God and man, placed them under a terrific tension. Not one on the membership roll of the Synod stained its record with crime or vice. But in the "lesser degrees of sin" there were the weaknesses and failures that sinful flesh is heir to.

So far as the record goes, it is rather evident that a clash of personalities had something to do with the fact that, though both men were absent from the organization meeting in Houston, Pastor Kleis was immediately enrolled on the roster of the clergy, but of Pastor Sager the record says, "He shall become a member of the Synod as soon as he sends a written application to the President". Then there was Pastor Braun's strange withdrawal from the Synod and the "cold shoulder treatment" he received when he wanted to affiliate again. Or, we think of the reaction to the enthusiastic but fundamentally sound proposals made by President Wendt at the Fourth Convention, at Castroville in 1854; and his own reaction to the slower but eventual defeat of his program. As we come to the later years of this period we might mention the motives and the procedure by which members of the Synod were suspended from membership, or because of which they themselves withdrew their membership. Or, far from exemplary and surely not edifying to their respective congregations was the feuding between Pastors Rudi and Kaspar in the neighboring parishes at Black Jack Springs and High Hill.

At the convention at Castroville, in 1854, the so-called "Texas Oath" was accepted. "Resolved: none of us shall leave Texas unless his condition of health can not stand up under the climate". Even some of those present at the convention later forgot, others evidently never placed themselves under the obligation. The acceptance of calls to northern and eastern congregations brought about vacancies in such numbers that at times a real crisis existed. Established congregations had to turn elsewhere for supply and so were lost to the Synod. New fields asking for supply could not be entered. And physical health or the climate of Texas were not always the prompting motives that led to the changes.

In degree of intensity, incidents like the following one were infrequent, we are sure. But a flaring temperament was commonly considered a part of "leadership" equipment. But here is the story.

"Across from the parsonage was the meeting place of a certain trio. One of them was a scribe and a pharisee all rolled up into one. Another was a young man who could barely read or write his name, but he was a sharp and ready debater. The third was a good natured fellow, inclined to religious emotionalism, and the victim of the intrigues hatched by the other two. Some time before, the three had caused such strife in the congregation that the law had locked the door of the church.

"One day they met again in their headquarters across the street and, as usual, intentionally attracted the pastor's attention in doing so. Back and forth he paced in his small study, wondering what plot was being concocted. As time passed his temper began to heat and boil. His breath and his steps grew shorter and faster.

"Suddenly the door across the street opened and 'the tool' came forth. He stepped into the parsonage and with unctuous sanctimony greeted, 'Good day, my dear brother! How are you?' Under the circumstances that was more than this particular pastor could take. 'What do you want here?' he demanded. 'Is it not true, you have been sent to start something?' Without waiting for an answer he grabbed his visitor by the collar, pushed him toward the door, boxed both his ears roundly and soundly, and with none too gracious a kick set him out into the street.—The 'brains' of the trio had succeeded in their interest, for within an hour the pastor was cooling off in the county jail. But as soon as this became known his loyal supporters secured his release."

But by the grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit such cases and incidents, and others, were curbed and dealt with. Typical is the record of a special pastors' conference held on the afternoon of the first day of the Synod's meeting at Comaltown in 1856. The record reads like this.

"The meeting was opened with prayer and the hymn:

'Heart and heart together bound,
Seek in God your true repose;
In your love the price is found
Of your Saviour's love and woes;
We the members, He the Head;
He the Sun, we beams He show'rs;
Brethren by one Master led,
We are His, and He is ours.'

"The occasion of the meeting was stated to be the discord that has developed between several of the brethren, and which is due to misunderstanding and offended pride. Emphasis was laid upon the evident truth that we can not hope to work under a blessing, neither can we expect God's pleasure to rest on the deliberations for which we have come together here in convention, so long as the bond of

love is not restored.—Because of the brevity of the time allotted, the conference did not accomplish everything desired. But even in the discussions love celebrated a glorious victory over the enemy forces, and in the private conversations that followed peace and harmony were restored."

Repeatedly does the record show that when "the enemy forces" raised their ugly head an appeal was made in the name of Him who said, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven"; and it was an appeal that was not left unheeded.

And so, in spite of the abundance and the virus of the species and variations of the weeds that just grew or that were intentionally planted in the field, in spite of the external situations and the internal weaknesses that handicapped the planters, the planting of the Church went on. It was as St. Paul had said, "I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase". As shown in our previously given roster, the number of the planters, pastors, continued to increase in spite of deaths and removals. As shown in our previously given honor roll, the fields and their plants, the congregations with their members and church buildings, their schools and pupils, increased in numbers. And all this was true in such proportions that it constitutes an accomplishment that is worthy of note. In fact, in this pioneer period we find, in their embryonic state or in a rather well pronounced development, all branches of that complete church program that we propose to trace and present in the next section of our story. There were religious education for the young, the youth, and the adult, home and foreign missions, a college, an orphan's home, a church publication, care for the widow and her children, various church organizations, and an effective over-all church administration.

These pioneers, the pastors and their lay associates, evidently followed Luther's injunction, "We must pray as though all work does no good, then work as though all praying does no good". In doing this they experienced the fulfillment of the Scripture that was read on November 10, 1851, at the organization meeting in Houston: Ephesians 4:1-16.

"I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all lowliness and meekness, with patience, forbearing one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all.—But grace was given to each of us according to the measure of Christ's gift. Therefore it is said, 'When He ascended on high He led a host of captives and He gave gifts to men'. And His gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers; and all this for the equipment of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the building up of the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of

the fullness of Christ; so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the cunning of men, by their craftiness in deceitful wiles. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into Him who is the Head, into Christ; from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every joint with which it is supplied, when each part is working properly, makes bodily growth and upbuilds itself in love."

Thus they also found heaven's answer to the hymn they sang in prayerful spirit on that eventful occasion.

"O Holy Spirit, enter in, Within our hearts Thy work begin,
Thy temple deign to make us.

Thou Sun of joy, Thou Light divine, O let Thy radiance in us shine;
To constant gladness wake us."

To us ever, Light of heaven, strength be given,
We implore Thee, As in prayer we come before Thee."



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